

From the well-organized desk of

P.O. Box 727
New York, N.Y. 10009
June 1, 1975

my dear



Rev. Ann Montague
c/o Miller & Day
313 West 29 Street
New York, N.Y. 10001

Dear Ann:

Don't call me a 'closet straight'; I declared my heterosexuality before I joined MCC. As a matter of fact, I had been considering 'associate membership' (friend of the church); but was assured by Roy, Jim Beers, etc., that I would be welcome as a Christian to a Christian church.

I had had the feeling, though, that there was a limit to the degree of involvement I should permit myself. I have the mathematical ability and bookkeeping skill to handle a treasurership rather easily; I have served in the past as treasurer for another organization; but did not feel at any of the times the treasurership was open, and still do not feel, that a hetero should serve MCC in that way.

Even to sing in the choir, even to join a Zion Family within MCC, took me some soul-searching. And yet, I no more wish to be identified by and/or limited to my romantic-sexual preferences than do most other people, members or not of MCC.

And with all the writing I have done of poems, parodies, essays, political and religious tracts, fiction, etc., I have never done a column about a fifth of whiskey or Beethoven, so please don't think of me as a Fifth Columnist.

My gayness, my 'queerness', are other than homosexual in content. Although the fire within me may not consist of romantic-sexual love for a woman and the demand for openness in manifesting that love, I scream within myself and publicly for the right to love. God is love. Your love, my love, God's love, homosexual love, heterosexual love, nonsexual love, love of people, love of a person. I scream. I need. I burn and cannot marry. Is that not 'queer'? Is that not gay?

Enough introduction. On Tuesday, May 27, I attended a meeting of the ad-hoc committee to plan MCC's part in the Christopher Street celebration. I was dismayed to have

verified to me what I had heard before: WE WON'T EVEN BE ASSEMBLING ON CHRISTOPHER STREET! This, as a gesture of appeasement, to the homophobic minister of some gospel or other.

From the well-organized desk of

m U n e l L D e r R

I was terribly disappointed at the refusal of the Board of Directors to grant \$80.00--or any amount--for buttons; which money would have been recovered and increased when the buttons were sold.

But what really disgusted me is that MCC is planning an allegedly 'ecumenical' service for that evening--and INTENTIONALLY EXCLUDING TWO GAY RELIGIOUS GROUPS!

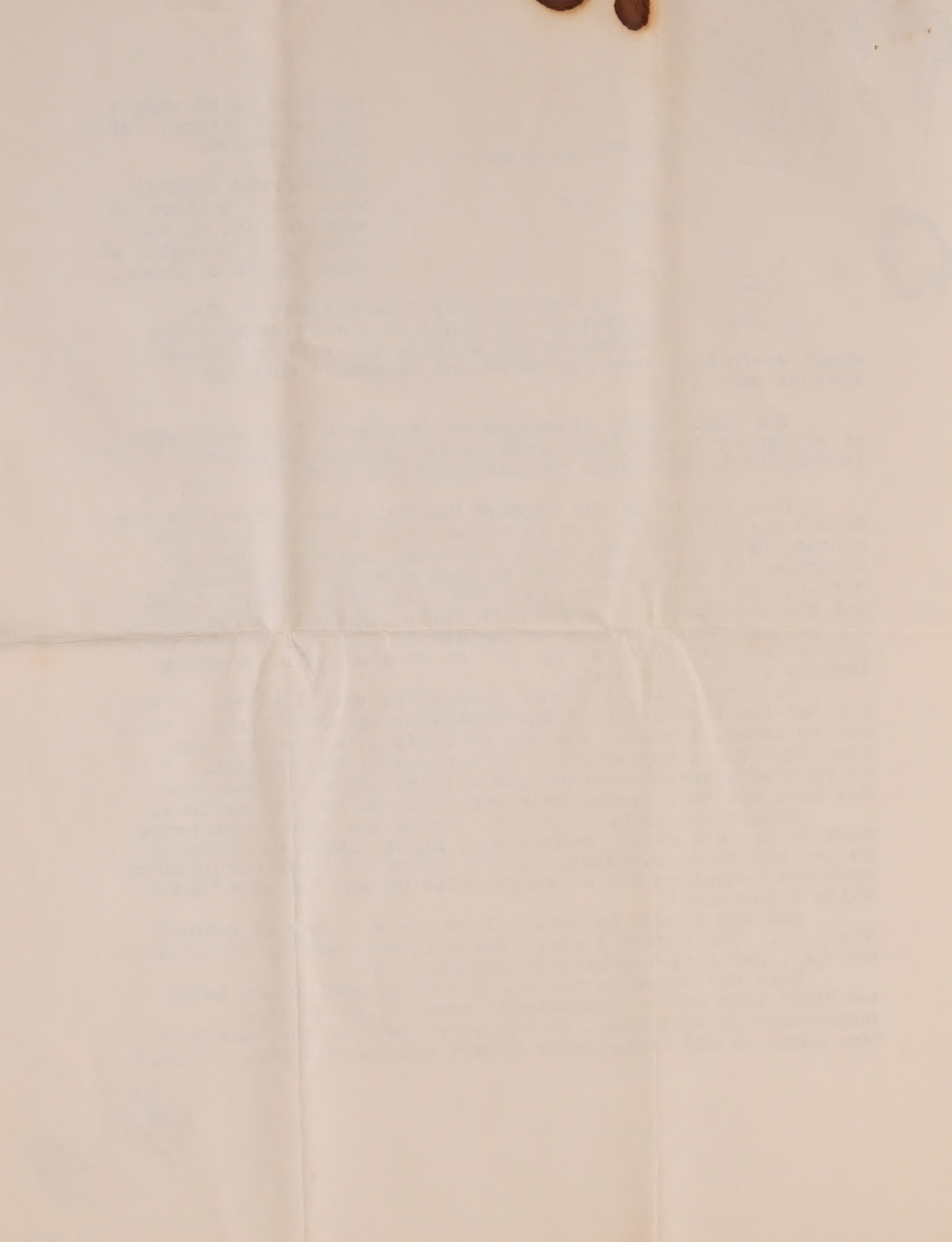
One, Church of the Beloved Disciple, has existed in New York longer than MCC. It is not so much the church as its pastor, Robert Clement, being excluded; and why? Because, according to Gail, last year he used a word which "starts with F, ends with K, and has U and C in the middle." I had not recalled this. I spoke with Father Clement on the phone, and he said he had spoken of people who had broken into the church and desecrated it by writing on the walls, "Fucking faggots should be killed."

My experience of Father Clement is very limited. I met him for the first time at the reception for Troy Perry. Some months later, I needed the use of a piano to rehearse and then tape the accompaniment for a parody I had written. I telephoned several churches and several organizations; the few that did have pianos were unwilling to let me use them.

Except for Father Clement. There was some maintenance work to be done at the church that night; and I was welcome to use the piano upstairs. As it turned out, the maintenance work was cancelled but he stayed with me and did paper work while I rehearsed.

And why should he have? I am not a member of Beloved Disciple. The parody I wrote was neither statedly Christian nor gay, but anti-psychiatric and feminist.

This Christian pastor and his congregation are being excluded from MCC's 'ecumenical' service for quoting homophobic desecrators...in the same 'set' as the homophobe who keeps us off Christopher Street and conceivably, although



not probably, the same person. Why are we retreating into closets? Why is the homophobe being chosen over the Christian?

From the well-organized desk of

Muriel L. DerR

The other gay religious group being excluded is The People's Church (etc.) and its pastor, Mikhail Itkin. Why? Because he is "too far left"; too radical. (Am I not also? And many other members of MCC?) In addition, some of his sexual practices are disapproved of by MCC. He is into bisexuality, leather, promiscuity, cruising strangers, and other things. All are outside my experience except promiscuity, which I tried and did not like. Some are beyond my comprehension. And some I myself cannot approve.

But how can I write objectively about a person I love so intensely? May I be permitted to love him as a friend? Why, certainly. Far be it from the church or the congregation to choose my friends for me. May I be permitted to respect him as a priest of the sacraments? Well... And may I be permitted to acknowledge him as a minister of the Gospel of Christ, to be as certain of his salvation as I am of my own? Good grief, no! His sexual practices do not conform to the rules of acceptability.

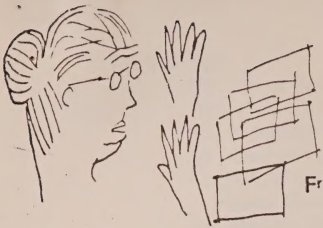
So I am therefore limited to loving him as a friend. But watch out, Muriel! "He might (gasp! choke!) have a crush on you!" You might find yourself in his bed getting FUCKED!

Fuck that attitude. A gay religious group is being excluded from an ecumenical service.

Also excluded, although perhaps more through oversight than intent, is Integrity, an Episcopal group similar to Dignity. Please do contact them. If you don't know how, ask me or any Episcopal in the congregation.

There are two gay black churches in Harlem which would have been forgotten, had I not mentioned them at Tuesday's meeting. And Mikhail tells me that when he spoke with you on the phone, you were noncommittal and spoke of waiting for these churches to contact us. How could they possibly know to?

Therefore I, as a Christian and as a member of MCC and as a gay heterosexual daughter of the Almighty God, am sending a copy of this letter to Dee Jackson and Jerry Cunningham, requesting that they invite these two churches to the Gay Pride ecumenical worship service. One has been contacted



-4-

From the well-organized desk of

already in another
context; the other is
called Tabernacle

mUriel L. Derr

Church of Christ and is
located at 37 West 116 Street

(between 5th and Lenox), 348-4400. I
attended and enjoyed a service there tonight;
so what if it wasn't quite my idiom?

I did not mention Gay Pride; I did not
feel it was my place to. I hope that Dee and
Jerry will.

I'm finding out how peace passeth understanding!

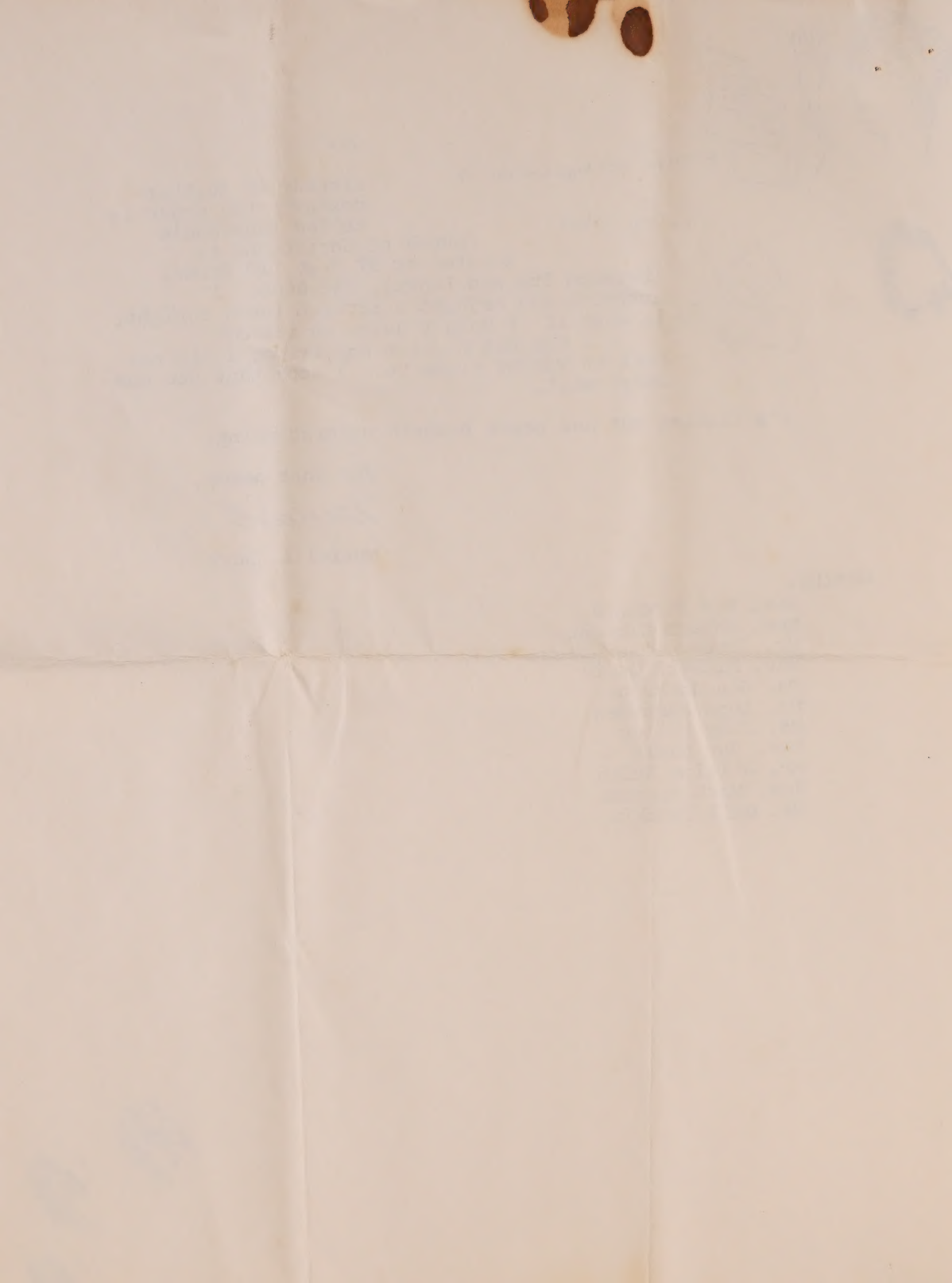
For that peace,

Muriel

Muriel L. Derr

COPIES:

Rev. Roy Birchard
Rev. Robert Clement
Mr. Jerome Cunningham
Rev. Mikhail Itkin
Ms. Dee Jackson
Ms. Lupe Martinez
Ms. Judy Miller
Rev. Jay Neely
Mr. William Smith
Rev. Mark Spencer
Ms. Gail Zadakis



MEMO TO:

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Rev. Roy Birchard
Mr. Frederick Bradford
Mr. George Carter
Church of the Eternal
Flame Universal
Bp. Robert Clement
Mr. Jerome Cunningham
Ms. Susan Day
Dignity
Ms. Teddy Doohan
Rev. Michael England
Mr. Gordon Fadenrecht
Mr. Michael Fisher

Ms. Brandy Glick
Mr. Tony Gonzales
Integrity
Bp. Mikhail Itkin
Ms. Dee Jackson
Mr. James Jarman
Rev. Magora Kennedy
Rev. Michael Koonsman
Rev. Gilbert Lincoln
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Rev. Ann Montague
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Mr. Gene Sherwin
Mr. Warren Smith
Mr. William Smith
Mr. Chesleigh Snow
Rev. Thomas Spaats
Bp. Mark Spencer
Tabernacle Church of Christ
Mr. Daniel Ventrelli
Rev. Howard Wells
Ms. Gail Zadakis

FROM: Ms. Muriel Derr

DATE: June 17, 1975

I wrote a letter to Ann Montague on June 1 and sent xeroxes to eleven people. For the rest of you, I enclose a xerox of a xerox.

I anticipated any number of responses to said letter, ranging from a more-or-less reluctant agreement followed by a measure of change in plans, to my being asked to resign my membership in MCC. What I did NOT expect was that my letter wouldn't be taken seriously: Oh, Muriel's angry, poor dear. And of course, she has the right to blow off steam. And it's certainly 'healthier' that she should do so with a typewriter than by stink-bombing the service.

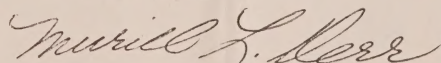
Well, I would like to reassure all of you that this 'schizophrenic-in-remission' has no intention of so doing: phew in the pew is not my thing.

And I may still find agreement. I may still be asked to resign. A man who is a member of MCC and ordained by another church preached a sermon wearing his collar. I heard whispers about it. I have second-hand information that another man, member (I think) of MCC and ordained in still another denomination, wore his collar to church and had it physically removed by the pastor. And two non-members (but former members, one of MCC San Francisco and the other Los Angeles), both bishops in a fourth denomination, were asked to not wear their collars to MCC. Ecumenical my backside. "I of Paul and I of Cephas and I of Appollos and I of Christ." Phooey. Thumbs down.

I made an error in my first letter. I just found out that the gay black church we have already been in contact with IS Tabernacle Church of Christ. However, there do exist about five other black churches with congregations largely or entirely gay; another gay Jewish group (men only); and several other Protestant gay groups.

Specifically about the so-called ecumenical service on Gay Pride Day — as I had NOT been informed — it will not even be HELD in a church but outdoors before the march. So there does not even exist a logistical problem of how many people the church will seat. Therefore, in my opinion, no reason exists for intentionally excluding four gay religious groups — and forgetting the existence of several others — when planning an allegedly ecumenical service.

Very truly yours,



Muriel L. Derr

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The Community of the Love of Christ

DONATION: \$1.25
More if you can, less if you can't....

THE G O S P E L A N D G A Y L I B E R A T I O N

+ + +

A Position Paper of
The Community of the Love of Christ

Submitted to the Pentecost Convocation, 4 - 6 June 1976,
of the
Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholic Communion

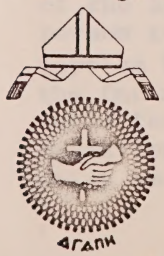
meeting at
Baltimore, Maryland

submitted by

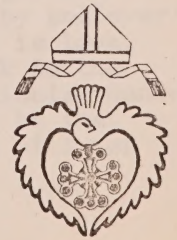
The Most Reverend Mikhail Francis Itkin, C.L.C.
Bishop of the Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholic Communion
also known as the
Evangelical-Eucharistic Catholic Observance,
and
Abbot of the Community of the Love of Christ

"To be a Christian is to be an extremist. Moderation is a Greek ideal, not Christian. Christian faith is not a halfway measure; it talks about going two miles instead of one, of plucking out eyes that disturb, of dying on a cross. It is to risk death, to love enemies, and to pray without ceasing. As one biblical writer put it, 'Would that you were hot or cold! So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew you out of my mouth' (Rev. 3:15-16)....'Christianity is an extremist belief, extreme and uncompromising in its tolerance and love.' (Terrence Eagleton). The Christian is not satisfied with maintaining a tension between the good and the possible. He (sic) does the good regardless of consequences or effectiveness. Faith involves intensity and commitment. We are called to love God with our whole being. Radicalism believes that it has something unique to offer that stands over against the other options." (Arthur G. Gish, The New Left and Christian Radicalism, Eerdmans)

Christian presence in the world today, even as in apostolic times, is most distinctly identified by an aggressive advocacy on behalf of "the least" (cf. Matt. 25:31-46). We believe this to be true because the Bible, God's word to us, contains this predominating thrust: The people of God—beginning with the prophets of the Old Covenant, continuing through Jesus Christ the Word Incarnate, our Brother, our Lord and our Liberator, and with Jesus' apostles of Truth of the pre-nicene and primitive era (as well as those in the true succession to the apostolic Truth through the ages), and including, at last, even us—have been called out from all peoples of the earth and have been shown what is true about God's creation. Namely, that justice, mercy, righteousness, peace and love are the basic elements



AN ECUMENICAL RELIGIOUS ORDER
with Episcopate and Tradition from
THE SYRO-CHALDEAN (AISOR) EVANGELICAL CATHOLIC COMMUNION
also known as
THE EVANGELICAL-EUCHARISTIC CATHOLIC OBSERVANCE
The Metropolitan Province of India, Ceylon, Milapur, Socotra, Messina
and the English Missions of
THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF THE EAST AND THE APOSTLES



of reality. As those who have seen Truth, the people of God are called to act as special witnesses to that Truth.

Set apart and with eyes opened, the Christian's orientation is different from that of others--those who have not seen; or seeing, have not believed. The Christian's perception and understanding of the world and of our work in the world is, indeed, at variance with that of non-believers. Jesus calls us to be true realists, to participate in the world in the way it really is, to strive to act out the Kingdom of God--the universal community of sister/brotherhood in Love--through justice, mercy, righteousness, peace and love in the Spirit of God-in-Christ, the Word made flesh.

The Christian believer's mind is, therefore, informed by certain specific biblical approaches:

The entire human community, regardless of any such superficial distinction as race, sex, sexuality, nation or economic class, is absolutely equal and mutually interdependent in the Spirit--"There is no longer Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female: for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

Those who are "the least" in society possess least of all the benefits of justice, mercy, righteousness, peace and love--the basic ingredients of God's own creation. Instead of the Bread of Life they have, all too often, been offered nothing but the stones of rejection, neglect and oppression. And unable to obtain that which society has denied, with the complicity of the establishment churches over the centuries, today "the least" have a special claim upon the Lord of these benefits and upon the people of God.

The Creator God, on behalf of those whose participation in the creation is most limited, ineluctably becomes their Advocate: to bring in "the reign of the people" that the prophet spoke of (Dan. 7:27).

Since we believe the Bible's clear proclamation that "the least" are the special concern of Jesus (Matt. 25, op cit)--that Jesus and the people of God by the grace of God-in-Christ can alone lift them from their helplessness--then Christians must listen actively to the poor and powerless, Gay people, Women, Third World people, youth, the aged, and all those cast out by an affluent society--and, indeed, to hear the voice of the oppressed, of the people seeking liberation and community, is to hear judgment upon the centuries of institutional christendom and upon our lives today, even as it is to hear a call to decision! The voice of the oppressed becomes the presence of the voice of the Lord calling us to decide how we, who claim to be followers of Jesus, will respond to "the least of these," Jesus' brothers and sisters.

Our response to the poor and the powerless, to the people seeking liberation in an oppressive society, is our response to their and our Lord and Brother, Jesus the Liberator. And our response to Jesus is our response to the oppressed and to the struggle of the people for liberation.

While we must seek spiritual unity, solidarity and love among all the disciples of Jesus, basing such efforts on the great unities of the faith (listed in Ephesians 4:3-6): One Body, the Church of Jesus; One Spirit, the creative and holy Spirit of Jesus; One Hope, that hope of the spiritual fulfillment of history in the Kingdom of God--the creative community of Love through Jesus; One Lord, Jesus our Brother who is Christ and Liberator; One Faith, the following in the Way of Jesus; One Baptism, the Baptism of the Spirit of Jesus, an initial spiritual experience which joins a person to Jesus and is made public for the community of faith by believer's baptism by immersion in water; and One God of all, the One Who is Love, the One made known to us in Jesus: we must simultaneously work in the world for the coming "reign of the people" (op cit). One particular manifestation of this call to radical ecumenical discipleship must be that which is concerned with building of a Christian Community that will tap

the roots that have been touched by God's covenant with all oppressed peoples seeking their own liberation as part of the world-wide struggle for the liberation of all people.

Some community of believers must arise today which seeks to be faithful to the revolutionary heritage of Jesus as received in the Bible and from the true disciples of Jesus throughout the ages: and assert as a special vocation within the world movement for the liberation of all peoples and the movement for a liberated church in a liberated world, the task of witnessing the Good News while serving the Gay Community from within—not as missionaries, but as Gay Christians coming together to create love, support and identity through God-in-Christ among all Gay sisters and brothers.

We must seek to apply the insights of the apostolic and primitive Community of Jesus to the needs of contemporary Gay people—offering the Bread of Life to those who never before had been offered anything but the stones of rejection, neglect and oppression or, on the other hand, in recent years, sometimes been offered sterile imitations of that establishment christendom which has blessed oppression, violence and intolerance over the centuries. In the turmoil of oppression, in the face of rejection, neglect and/or co-optation, in the center of the cyclone that is our struggle for freedom, we hear the Call of the Lord in the words of the Bible: "You are a people holy to the Lord your God, who has chosen you out of all peoples on earth to be God's special people" (Deut. 14:2). We hasten to add, lest confusion reign, that this is not to say that Gay people alone are the chosen people of the Old and New Covenants: but that Gay people, together with all peoples seeking liberation, are called to "prepare a people that shall be fit for the Liberator" (Luke 1:17).

(It should be understood that the word Gay, in this context, does not exclusively refer to sexual-affectional preference; but, rather, defines a life-style in which love, trust and support between all people supplant relationships based on hate, fear and competitive aggression. Gay is a process of attaining mutual and equal social and sensual relationships among all human beings in accord with the Will of God and the Spirit of Christ: which is realized through participation in the free dynamic expression of Love and through realization of the androgynous Spirit of holiness/wholeness with every person. All people are sensual, sexual and compassionate beings; and should not be labeled as hetero-, homo-, bi-, or a-sexual. Thus to restrict sensuality is a denial of the freedom of each person to follow the leadings of the Spirit. All dimensions of unexploitative sensuality which grow from Love come from the Spirit of Jesus who is Love.)

Freedom in Jesus must involve the pursuance of creative sensuality and not the reinforcement of sexual-role models. One of the Gospels cast out of the Canon of Scripture by the so-called "Oecumenical" Council at Chalcedon, but accepted by the Syro-Chaldean Church in the South India Province as well as in some other Provinces, and by some other sections of the Eastern Church, says: "Jesus said to them: When you make the two one, and when you make the inner as the outer and the outer as the inner and the above as the below, and when you make the male and the female into a single one, so that the male will not be male and the female not be female, when you make an eye in the place of eyes...then shall you enter the Kingdom" (Gospel of Thomas: 22).

However, in this society (and with the complicity of the institutional churches' sell-out to the establishment) we are oppressed by the maintenance of certain roles. The present roles women and men have been conditioned into reinforce systems which thrive on competition and alienation from our self and from other human beings: and, therefore, precisely that alienation from God which constitutes the very root nature and meaning of sin. Such

roles negate half of each person's creative potential. In the liberated community of Love—the Kingdom of God which Jesus proclaimed—the Holy Spirit frees us from role-playing: women's strengths and intellect are fully actualized, as also are men's sensitivity and emotions.

We are called to live, in the here and now, those changes in society which we wish to see brought about. In this, we must recover the primitive Christian proclamation that Jesus our Brother is Christ, Lord and Liberator: who died, who rose, who comes again in every moment through the Spirit! Thus we, ourselves, must live that liberation we are about in our struggles! The radical reformation, true to the apostolic pattern, as Gish notes, "...rejected the notion of bringing change from the top down....Rather, change must start with communities of believers who live changed lives.... 'salvation' (or rather redemption) means the newly acquired strength to walk the narrow path and to know oneself as a part of the divine drama which will eventually lead to the kingdom of God on earth. It means also the awareness of being a fighter in the incessant warfare between the powers of light and of darkness. Change comes when people begin to live in the kingdom and are obedient to Christ." (Gish, op cit).

The universality of Christian Love, leading to that kingdom in which we are free of the operant conditioning of Constantinian church and state, was foreshadowed by the prophet Daniel (already quoted) in writing of "the coming reign of the people" (7:27) and by John the Beloved Disciple of Jesus when writing "the new song: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to break its seals, for you were slain and by your blood you did purchase for God persons of every tribe and language, people and nation: you have made of them a royal house, to serve our God as priests, and they shall reign upon earth.'" (Rev. 5:9).

The Good News of Jesus calls us, as already said, to those sisters and brothers that have been written off by the establishment as "the least." There are two basic ways to reach out and help one another, and to serve the people in the struggle. The one way is to give a band-aid for wounds. The other way is to end the cause of the disease.

The disease of oppressed peoples is powerlessness and injustice imposed from above.

Both ways of service are desperately needed—for even while the struggle rages about us, there are those who are wounded in battle and who need band-aids. It is the obligation of radical Christians to provide Gay Social Services while the battle rages: so that those who have been hurt and damaged may be helped to pick themselves up and re-enter the struggle for liberation. However, such social services, in and of themselves, are but a stop-gap measure (an essential one; but just stop-gap). They are truly acts of love which acknowledge injustice and inequality, and bind up the wounds of the broken: but they do nothing, in and of themselves, to change the oppression.

The way of cure involves striking out at the roots of oppression within ourselves and our institutions: by the grace of God-in-Christ given to us in the Spirit as strength for struggle—to bring into being the universal free community of sister/brotherhood in the creative life of God-in-Christ through Jesus' nonviolent revolution of transforming Love in the same Spirit.

Such an active, dynamic and aggressive attempt to get at the causes of oppression and exploitation and overturn them is an appropriate work for the people of God, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ our Liberator. Only that course squares with the biblical perceptions we have gained since God called us out of Ur, led us across the Red Sea waters; and in Jesus granted our liberation from oppression, death and destruction.

Today we are called by the Spirit to participate in the revolutionary life-style of Love and Service of the people taught by Jesus who was the Servant of the people. The only effective work of the Gospel today is to be found in a community serving the people, a community of Agapé and Action, affirming that the revolution is New Life for all humanity; and taking up the claims of the Gospel for this age, claims which have been largely abandoned by the institutional church since the IVth century.

It is commonly admitted by radical Christians today that we are called upon to create a new, alternative Community of Jesus. Jesus' Teaching calls us to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable (cf. our Lady Mary's Magnificat, Luke 1:46-55): but in the ages of its sell-out to the state, the institutional church has been more concerned with comforting the comfortable and so has added to the affliction of the already oppressed.

In Nazi Germany the institutional church sold out and went under. Its identity was not with the oppressed but with the oppressor. Then an alternative community, a Confessing Church stood up and made its witness in its own blood.

In the 16th century the institutional church blessed the nobility and added to the curses the peasants lived under. Then, too, an alternative community of Waldensian, Anabaptist, Quaker and Radical Reformers seeking to recover the evangelical life-style and revolution of biblical discipleship rose up and, likewise, made its witness in its own blood.

Is it possible that such a time will come to us?

Is it possible that now is that time?

Looking at the world-crisis today, along with other radical Christians we must respond: Yes! "Now is the time of choice! Now is the day of liberation!" (2 Cor. 6:2)

Faith divorced from a revolutionary commitment to social liberation is a blasphemous mockery of the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus!!!

Thus far, we have said no more than other radical Christians have been saying for some time now. What we are about to say, however, will be something of a shock to many of our radical Christian sisters and brothers.

Today, a community of radical Gay Christian believers is necessary to work within the Gay Community--as part of the world-movement on its way to a liberated church in a liberated world, to come together as a fellowship in which all people find themselves accepted as they are, ever committed to proclaim the Good News and Name of Jesus as the Call to make us free "to bring the Good News to the poor; to proclaim liberty to the captives, to the unseeing new vision, to those in bondage freedom, to the oppressed liberation, to all the time of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:16-17).

As the Community of the Love of Christ has reunited with the Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholic Communion, this Call we issue for a believer's Church-Community of radical Gay Christians may seem contradictory, separatist and/or sectarian to some of our Evangelical Catholic and other radical Christian sisters and brothers. In the Agape of Jesus we are obliged to explain where we are coming from to sisters and brothers to whom this may prove a stumbling block.

Within the context of Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholicism, the Community of the Love of Christ is "a radical, liturgical and apostolic Ecumenical Religious Order" under vows and a stated Covenant, Way of Discipleship or Rule. While membership is completely ecumenical, we also function as a Province of the Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholic Communion.

Paul Potter writes: "I say church because in spite of what we observe them actually doing, churches stand for the salvation of men's (sic) souls, the salvation of the humanity (frequently called Godliness) of its members. I say church because church stands for a belief in a radically different, spiritually liberated life which is thought to be so changed as to be unimaginable to people who live in this world. I say church because church

stands for communion, and it is the church feeling of communion that I believe must be at the bottom of any organization we build....

"We need a revolutionary church that is connected to our lives, that projects a vivid image of our capacity to love, that strengthens our belief in the reality of that capacity by teaching us to recognize and resist the oppression that has damaged it. We need a church that will separate us from our old class-based identities, that will help us validate our experience, that will make it possible for us to see that our oppression and our potential for liberation are shared. A revolutionary church must commit its members to their potential by embodying as much of it as it can, but it must also comprehend its own limits and struggle against them under the eye of its own vision." (Paul Potter, A Name for Ourselves; my emphasis +MFI)

It is precisely because of this comprehension of limits and struggle against them on the one hand, and the biblical perception that the Church of Jesus must be "a house of prayer for all people" (Isa. 56:7) cleansed of money-changers and oppressors (Matt. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46), that the Community of the Love of Christ realizes the error of functioning as a separatist Gay Church per se. The Church of God-in-Christ must be for all people: and yet, within that Church Universal (which we symbolically reunite with by our reunification with the Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholic Communion) there is room for specialized ministries, covenant fellowships and religious orders working in and to particular communities of the people of God. Thus the Community of the Love of Christ, while remaining a part of Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholicism, remains so as a specialized radical Gay Christian religious order, open to all people but particularly bringing the Bread of Life to those Gay people who have never before been offered anything but the stones of rejection, oppression and neglect.

Understood in that sense only, we can appropriate some of what Potter says about "revolutionary separatist churches", as he continues: "The strength of a revolutionary church would be in the reality of its separatism, the extent to which it was actually able to break people away from dehumanized life, the extent to which it could give them tools and concepts to live by, the extent to which it could make its vision concrete--provide substance for people to use....

"I should make it clear that when I say 'revolutionary separatist church' I have in mind some merging of revolutionary religious and revolutionary political ideas; I think of a strong, loving band of disciplined (but that is not the right word) people who are enabled by the spiritual solidarity of their community (communion) to explore and survive in the catacombs and caves of Western civilization and still maintain the faith....

"The kind of church I have in mind can only be built around a coherent group, a group that is defined by common class or social experience. But to recognize this need for coherence, the necessity of separatism, obviously raises some problems--particularly for radicals. The language of separatism is threatening. It is the harsh, didactic language of people who are wrenching themselves loose from subservience, and radicals have been afraid of it--for good reason. The radical vision is built around the recognition that men (sic) are kept down by being kept apart and the immediate consequence of separatism is to exacerbate apartness, to make people understand all the ways they are separate from and antagonistic toward other groups in the society....

"But we must face up to it....If social fragmentation is to be got out of, we must give up our search for an easy way. To get out, we must go through. If there are connections to be made with other oppressed groups, they must be made on the other side when we have finally broken or are well on our way to breaking our identities loose from the system....

"I am not saying it would be easy....But I do believe that if you are in touch with yourself, if you are confident that you know your own need and know that nobody can take that knowledge away from you or manipulate it, then it is possible to recognize other people who are in touch with their need. And it is this intuitive recognition that might provide the motivation and the bridge that conflicting separatisms could meet on....

"Implicit in the notion of separatism is a way to get beyond it....Beyond the revolutionary separatist church, beyond separatism, is the Great Council of Revolutionary Separatist Movements. If you will, imagine for a moment a day when people representing each of the many ways in which we have been broken and internally fragmented, torn apart from each other and ourselves, can at last meet, look each other directly in the eye, find it in themselves to smile, and reach out...." (Potter, op cit.)

In accord with Potters analysis, some of us see the need for a radical Gay Christian Church-Community, a covenant fellowship and religious order dedicated to the renewal of Jesus' revolution of transforming Love as taught and practiced in the apostolic and primitive Church-Community--a work dedicated to the liberation of our Gay sisters and brothers through the Spirit of Liberation sent by Jesus.

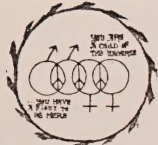
For too long, Gay people have cried: "God, we believe; we have told You we believe. We have not denied You, then rise up and defend us. Acknowledge us, oh God, before the whole world. Give us also the right to our existence." (Radclyffe Hall, The Well of Loneliness.) Now, hearing the voice of God in answer to our centuries' long prayer, we who are Gay and followers of Jesus take up the Call of the Spirit on our own behalf and on behalf of all people seeking liberation: for none other will raise it for us!

We bring the matter, first, before the community of faith: we call upon those who style themselves disciples of Jesus to immediately--**IMMEDIATELY!** Not caustiously or at some distant day--take measures to undo what has been done and to terminate Now the continuing oppression. The churches of institutional christendom continue to behave like the rich young ruler who loved his riches more than he loved Jesus (Luke 18: 18-27). We call upon the community of faith and love to remember its first Love, Jesus, the "Thou" of its faith: and to seek the face of God-in-Christ in the oppressed ones of the earth. We call upon all who call themselves Jesus' disciples to renew their Covenant in the Word Incarnate and to follow the Servant of the people by throwing themselves fearlessly into the arena to, likewise, serve the people.

The Church of Jesus is the body of those people in the world who are committed to breaking the bonds of human oppression--their own and that of others--in a manner that affirms their basic humanity and the right of all persons to franchise over their own existence in accord with the revolutionary Call of the Good News of Jesus. "Yes, a Christian revolutionary. And not a revolutionary who happens to be Christian, or in spite of being Christian: but revolutionary because Christian!" (Eric Gill)

As radical Gay Christians, Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholic faithful and professed religious of the Community of the Love of Christ, we stand in solidarity with all Gay people and with Women, Children, the Aged, Third World people, Workers and all others in their struggle against the oppression of the ruling class and the state. We stand in ecumenical solidarity with all engaged in the struggle for liberation, religious or secular, whatever they call themselves: and we recognize their work as the true service and ministry of the people that is the heart of the Gospel of Jesus.

The prophetic task is one of creatively building the roots and foundations of the New Order in Christ: and we celebrate Jesus our Brother as Presence (prosōpon) for us as we proclaim the Spirit speaking humanity, hope, love and justice. We proclaim the new age, the realm of the rising bread, the reign of the people, the world of peace and human love that is the permanent Gospel promised by Jesus and anticipated at the Table of Jesus' Freedom Meal. Amen.



Gay House Centre is a special project of **The Community of the Love of Christ**: "Love is the Spirit of this Community and Service is its Work. And this is our Way: To live together in Peace, to seek the Truth in Love, to help one another in Joy." (St. Basil)

While the Work of the Centre is initially designed as a Ministry of Concern for the Gay Community, its services are open to all regardless of affectional preference, sexual orientation, gender identification, religious affiliation, ethnic background or age.

We propose to open a Centre in New York City. We seek to serve especially those away from home, the estranged, those without families, those emotionally damaged by the society in which we all live, and those involved in the use of drugs.

We feed them, clean them up, try to assist in getting their heads together and help them re-establish their rightful spiritual and cultural interests. We go, constructively, where others (such as welfare agencies) will not go and still others (such as police) should not go.

Service to the Community: Gay House Centre will provide the following social services, realising that persons are incapable of truly acting for creative change unless their individual bodies and heads are together.

- * **COFFEE-HOUSE:** A gentle, loving atmosphere where Gay people can meet, socialize and feel at home.
- * **SWITCHBOARD:** Referrals and telephone peer counseling.
- * **HOUSING:** Emergency and permanent.
- * **FOOD:** Free meals daily.
- * **CLOTHING:** Free store.
- * **JOB:** Free employment and job training.
- * **HEALTH SERVICES:** Initially, referrals, but it is our goal to have our own clinical facilities for the Gay Community.
- * **COUNSELING:** Growth groups, peer counseling, pastoral counseling and the provision of a supportive environment for persons to explore their inner psychic spaces.
- * **SUICIDE PREVENTION:** Hot line, counseling, rap-groups and referrals.
- * **DRUG COUNSELING & DRUG ABUSE EDUCATION PROGRAM:** Dealing with these areas of crucial concern combatting the drug problems within the Gay Community.

* **ALCOHOLIC RECOVERY PROGRAM:** Re-education of alcoholics and compulsive drinkers, so that they can exercise free option as to whether to become total abstainers or voluntary social drinkers.

* **MILITARY & DRAFT COUNSELING:** For those in the military with problems and for those having to make a decision as regards selective service.

* **PRISONER PROGRAM:** Correspondence with, visitations to and help for Gay legal & psychiatric institutional prisoners.

* **GAY YOUTH:** Peer groups coming to terms with and directing their own lives.

* **EDUCATIONAL:** To fulfill the individual learning needs of drop-outs from institutional education; also, to provide programs of Gay studies, to discover the history and culture of Gay people.

* **GAY ELDERLY:** Peer groups dealing with the problems peculiar to Gay older people.

* **GAY PARENTS:** Peer groups and legal referrals.

* **PARENTS OF GAYS:** Referrals.

* **GENDER IDENTITY:** Work with the Erickson Educational Foundation and peer groups for transvestites and transsexuals.

* **SOCIAL CHANGE:** Referrals and liaison with community organizations for civil rights, human rights and social transformation.



THE SPIRITUAL WORK

The Spiritual Work: The core of all this Work, the calm spot that provides us refuge at the centre of the cyclone of daily life and gives us strength for struggle (both inwardly, in personal transformation and outwardly, in living the creative life) is the Sacramental Life of the Church. In the Celebration of Life in the Christ who is our Light, Love and Liberation, the Sacraments are made available to all who wish to receive them.

The prayer of the Community, offered at the Celebration of the Freedom Meal (Mass or Holy Eucharist), sums up the goals of the Community: "O God, God of All, here in this fellowship we must come to the place where it seems that all space is filled with the rush of a mighty wind, and a tongue of fire over every head, and suddenly we are welded into One in the Spirit of Struggle sent by Jesus our Liberator. Then we can go down from this place with strength to change the world. When sometimes it seems hard and we feel that many demands are being made upon us, call to our remembrance our sisters and brothers out in the streets of the world, and how much they need what we are putting together here. Teach us that if we don't put it together, nobody else will, and our sisters and brothers are going to be destroyed. And if they are destroyed, we will be destroyed with them: perhaps by them. Therefore, O God, grant us the Spirit of Liberation, the Holy Spirit, that we may do those things which must be done to end all divisions of nation, race, sex, life-style and class: and to bring into being your New Way of peace, freedom and the Creative Life in all that we say and do-through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, our Brother and our Liberator. Amen."

No one is excluded from the Sacramental Life of this Community and, likewise, no one is required to be a member of the Community or to participate in its worship services in order to participate in the other services described.



OUR PRESENT NEEDS

Our Present Needs: We are in desperate need for funding at this time in order to get this proposed Centre out of the planning stages. We are presently considering several buildings in Greenwich Village. Funds are needed to make the initial payment and to facilitate getting the project off the ground. We are asking your help at this time.

By this sharing we learn Active Love, perhaps for the first time: love for our brothers and sisters; for the destitute and lonely and outcast; the despised and rejected whom we want to serve; for the lovable and the unlovable; for our neighbor, persons we have never seen and generations yet unborn.

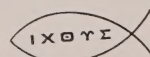
Please help us to continue in this Work and Way of Conscious Service.



DONATIONS

Donations: The Community of the Love of Christ (Evangelical Catholic), Inc. is the legally chartered religious corporate body which gives civil and legal status to the Community and its several missions and projects, including **Gay House Centre**. It is a recognized non-profit and tax-exempt body by the United States Internal Revenue Service (Num. 237010841 with a 501-(c)(3) Classification), and is also registered as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the State of California (Num. 537795). All **Donations and Contributions are Tax Deductible**. Such contributions should be made out to **The Community of the Love of Christ** and earmarked for **Gay House Centre Fund**.

For further information contact:
GAY HOUSE CENTRE FUND
 c/o **The Community of the Love of Christ**
 339 Lafayette Street
 New York City, N.Y. 10012
 Phone: (212) 228-9244



* SUGGESTED DONATION *

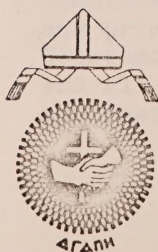
\$ 2.00

MORE IF YOU CAN,
LESS IF YOU CAN'T!

THE RENEWAL OF THE FAITH OF SYRO-CHALDEAN EVANGELICAL CATHOLICISM,
AS TAUGHT BY MAR DIODORUS, THEODORE, NESTORIUS,
AND JACOBUS (ULRIC VERNON HERFORD);
AND THE FUTURE OF THE COMMUNION IN RADICAL ECUMENICAL DISCIPLESHIP

Submitted to the Pentecost Convocation, 4 - 6 June 1976,
of the
Evangelical Catholic Communion
meeting at
Trespasser's Will Coffee House
York Road and 42nd Street
Baltimore, Maryland

submitted by
The Most Reverend
Mikhail Francis Itkin, C.L.C.
Bishop of the Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholic Communion
also known as
The Evangelical-Eucharistic Catholic Observance,
and
Abbot of the Community of the Love of Christ



AN ECUMENICAL RELIGIOUS ORDER
with Episcopate and Tradition from
THE SYRO-CHALDEAN (AISOR) EVANGELICAL CATHOLIC COMMUNION
also known as
THE EVANGELICAL-EUCHARISTIC CATHOLIC OBSERVANCE
The Metropolitan Province of India, Ceylon, Milapur, Socotra, Messina
and the English Missions of
THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH OF THE EAST AND THE APOSTLES





Unto Jesus Christ who loves us,
by whose resurrection we are raised from bondage,
and by whom we are called to be a peculiar people,
holy unto God our Heavenly Parent:
to Christ and the Holy Spirit with the Parent
be the glory and the dominion forever.
Amin.

On Pentecost we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the first apostles and disciples of Jesus and the birth of the church. The fruits of the Spirit may well be summed up as strength for struggle for the transformation of people and society, given to those who have accepted the Will of God in the Spirit of Christ and who bear witness to the Kingdom.

In 1898 at Oxford, England, the Order of the Christian Faith emerged to give expression to a fresh spirit of radical commitment growing among a new generation of Christian disciples. Some years later, the founder of the Order, the Most Reverend Ulric Vernon Herford (Mar Jacobus) wrote of the Order as a renewed Franciscanism in an ecumenical framework. He described early Franciscanism in these terms: "Of what were Saint Francis and his spirit the fruits? Of the historic Christian and Catholic social organism and of the monastic life. He inaugurated the life of the friars as contrasted with that of the monks. Dip into the Rule of Saint Benedict and taste its sweet reasonableness--Jacob's warning, not to overdrive his flocks, addressed to the abbot, etc. Discipline and obedience, the starting point--what the modern man and woman abhors, but the fruits of which we inherit--Saint Francis took out of the cloister into the highways of humanity. There was always the background, taken for granted, of Eucharist and daily Divine Office. It was a great step forward on the slow evolution from external to internal discipline; the taking over of the individual, in much self-direction, of the disciplined losing of self for the Church, the Kingdom, the whole human race." (Herford, The Modern Value of Franciscanism, in Reconciliation November 1934, published by the British Fellowship of Reconciliation)

In 1902, this Order became the English (and first Western) Missions of the Metropolitan Province of India, Ceylon, Milapur, Socotra, and Messina of The Syro-Chaldean Church--a Metropolitan jurisdiction of The Holy Catholic Church of the East and the Apostles, sometimes called Aisor or Assyrian, and sometimes called Nestorian. Upon obtaining union with The Syro-Chaldean Church and receiving episcopal consecration therein as Metropolitan of the English-Missions, Mar Jacobus established the Work in the West as The Evangelical Catholic Communion. The union was brought about precisely because of the correspondence of Mar Jacobus' radical and liturgical framework (which was based, in large part, on some of the insights of the radical reformation as well as on his studies of the apostolic and primitive church), with the radical incarnational theology and primitive Christian witness of the Syro-Chaldean Church.

The earliest commitment of the Evangelical Catholic Communion was to a radical outworking of biblical faith and life. Although Mar Jacobus commitment was to a pre-nicene Christianity, stressing the apostolic and primitive eras and bearing witness against the fallen state of the Constantinian establishment; nonetheless, like the Syro-Chaldean Church and all who are called "Nestorian", he accepted for the Communion the earliest and ecumenical formulation of the Creed put forth at Nicaea:

He wrote: "Our group of Christians desired to be in the Catholic Church in an orderly and regular way without violating our consciences. We could subscribe to the real Nicene Creed—'We believe in One God, Father Almighty, Maker of all things, visible and invisible: And in One Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is of the Essence of the Father: Divine Being from Divine Being, Light from Light, True Divine Being from True Divine Being, begotten not made, of the same Essence with the Father, through whom all things were made, both those in Heaven and those on Earth; who for us and for our salvation came down, was made flesh, came as man, suffered, rose the third day, ascended into heaven and is coming to judge living and dead: and in One Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. Amen.'—still the official Creed of the East Syrians and the only OEcumenical Creed. Mar Basilus representing the reasonable tradition of the school of Antioch, was able and willing to help us. So in the regular way, not with a *cong   d'   lire*, but with a petition from our people, I went to him and was ordained and consecrated on the basis of this Creed." (from The Guardian, an Anglican weekly newspaper now defunct: emphasis in the above mine, +MFI)

Fr. George F. Tull comments on this: "This position completely avoided the theological difficulty of either affirming or denying the Filioque clause....This Creed of the Universal Church, set forth by the 318 Bishops meeting at Nicaea in the year 325 it thus an ideal basis for the work of Christian Unity, having no seeds of dissension within it and being uniquely acceptable to 'Orthodox,' dissident Easterns and Western Christians alike. Its general acceptance by all today would surely be a real forward step towards the realisation of the unity for which the Bishop so devoutly longed. The importance of this needs to be more widely known. It may be noted in passing that the East Syrian form of the (later) Constantinopolitan-Nicene Creed agrees with the Orthodox doctrine of the Holy Spirit: 'We believe....in one Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, the life-giving Spirit, and in One Holy and Apostolic Church....' etc. The 'long' Nicene Creed was recognised at the Council of Constantinople (381) as the Creed of the Church of Jerusalem, but not as an Oecumenical Creed, as the original version was then solemnly affirmed." (Tull, Vernon Herford, Apostle of Unity)

In addition to the affirmation of the Nestorian tradition, which Mar Jacobus refers to in the above as "the reasonable tradition of the school of Antioch," Mar Jacobus and the Communion placed themselves firmly in that tradition of radical biblical witness which, in the West, blossomed in the spiritual Franciscans, the Waldensians and the Radical Reformation. Indeed, the very phrase "Evangelical Catholic" was adopted from the use of Erasmus and Juan de Valdes in the XVth Century.

In 1903, with the death of Mar Basilus in South India, a break between the Syro-Chaldean Church and the Evangelical Catholic Communion on the one hand, and the Patriarchate of the Holy Catholic Church of the East and the Apostles on the other hand, took place. This break had been in the making for many years: due to Mar Basilus (and later Mar Jacobus) protests against the many abuses which had crept into the Patriarchate: including the medieval nepotism concerning the office of Catholicos-Patriarch; the erastian and Constantinian approaches of the Patriarchate; the renunciation, on the part of the Patriarchate, of the radical Biblical witness that had informed earlier Nestorianism; the compromises of the Patriarchate with the docetism of the Western Church's missionaries; and several other issues. This necessitated the issuance of a Syro-Chaldean (Aisor) Confessional Statement, being the Faith of the Holy Catholic Church of the East and the Apostles restored in the Metropolitan Province of India, Ceylon, Milapur, Socotra, Messina, and the English Missions of

the Syro-Chaldean Church, known as The Evangelical Catholic Communion. That Confessional Statement was issued in December 1903 by the approval of the Metropolitan, Mar Jacobus: and that document appears later in this paper.

The Evangelical Catholic Communion in England quickly became controversial and the centre of much attention despite its smallness. It attracted a loyal membership from a wide cross-section of theological traditions and ecclesiastical denominations; people who accepted the radical incarnational teachings of traditional Nestorian thought and the Biblical implications of being a "separate, called-out people" (the true meaning of the word "ek-klesia" from which we derive the word "church"), and the Radical Reformation's teaching concerning a servant-people following Jesus Christ our Lord, our Brother and our Liberator, who was the Servant of the people. In matters of praxis, Mar Jacobus and other members of the Evangelical Catholic Communion were active at that time in the founding of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Christian Socialist Movement, as well as in the later Movement for a Pacifist Church of Christ.

Since it is necessary, at this time, as the Communion considers its fundamental basis of faith and its direction this Pentecost weekend, to deal with our historic tradition, it will perhaps be useful to clarify the radical incarnational theology of the School of Antioch typified by Saints Diodore, Theodore the Interpreter and Nestorius. Interestingly enough, in some contemporary Roman Catholic and Anglican theological circles, there is a re-evaluation of Nestorian teaching taking place: and an unorganized Neo-Nestorian movement seems to be forming among radical and progressive theologians. As an example, Canon Charles E. Raven writes of the prime theologian of the School, Saint Theodore of Mopsuestia (called the Interpreter): "He is the outstanding member of a school in which we can recognize a type of theology not far removed in method or result from that to which the scientific movement has constrained us. He at least starts from history not from dogma, sifts the evidence of the New Testament, accepts its obvious emphasis upon the manhood (sic) of Christ, and only then asks himself in what sense the Nazarene is God." (Raven, Apollinarianism, Cambridge University Press, 1923)

Other writers dealing specifically with the Nestorian contribution to theology and/or taking an essentially Neo-Nestorian stance include the following: (In some of them, the Nestorian and Neo-Nestorian influence is explicit and clear; in others it is implicit only): Aldams, Henry Mills, GOD IN HIS WORLD--An Interpretation (Harper & Bros.); Arnold, Eberhard, THE EARLY CHRISTIANS AFTER THE DEATH OF THE APOSTLES (Plough); Berdyaev, Nicolai, CHRISTIAN EXISTENTIALISM (Harper & Row); Boyd, Malcolm, CHRISTIAN: ITS MEANINGS IN AN AGE OF FUTURE SHOCK (Hawthorn), THE LOVER (Word); Brown, John Fairman, THE LIBERATED ZONE (John Knox Press); Cousins, Ewert H. (Editor), PROCESS THEOLOGY (Newman); Griffin, David R., A PROCESS CHRISTOLOGY (Westminster); Gogarten, F., CHRIST THE CRISIS (SCM Press); Grillmeier, Aloys, S.J., CHRIST IN CHRISTIAN TRADITION (Mowbrays); Heard, Gerald, THE CODE OF CHRIST (Harper & Bros), THE CREED OF CHRIST (Harper & Bros); Hurley, Loyal F., THE OUTCOME OF INFINITE GRACE (Sacred Literature Concern); Kirkpatrick, Dow (Editor), THE FINALITY OF CHRIST (Abingdon); Lejeune, R. (Editor), CHRISTOPH BLUMHARDT AND HIS MESSAGE (Plough); Moltmann, Jurgen, THE GOSPEL OF LIBERATION (Word), THEOLOGY OF HOPE (Harper & Row); Pittinger, Norman, CHRIST FOR US TODAY (Edited: SCM Press), THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AS SOCIAL PROCESS (Epworth), CHRISTOLOGY RECONSIDERED (in Prospect for Theology edited by F.G. Healey, Nisbet Pub.), GOD IN

PROCESS (SCM Press), IN CELEBRATION (Two Addresses in In Celebration, Integrity), LOVE LOOKS DEEP (Hodder & Stoughton), A VISION AND A WAY (Forward Movement), THE WORD INCARNATE (SCM Press & Harper and Row); Raven, Charles, Op cit.; Richard, Paul, THE SCOURGE OF CHRIST (Alfred A. Knopf); Robinson, John A. T., EXPLORATION INTO GOD (Stanford University), THE HUMAN FACE OF GOD (Westminster), IN THE END GOD (Harper & Row); Ruether, Rosemary Radford, THE RADICAL KINGDOM (Harper & Row), LIBERATION THEOLOGY (Paulist); Soelle, Dorothee, CHRIST THE REPRESENTATIVE (SCM Press), THE TRUTH IS CONCRETE (Search Press); Taipa, Ralph J. (Editor), THE THEOLOGY OF CHRIST—COMMENTARY (Bruce); Wallis, Jim, AGENDA FOR BIBLICAL PEOPLE (Harper & Row); Yoder, John H., THE ORIGINAL REVOLUTION (Herald).

(It might be noted, in the above list, that most of the openly Neo-Nestorian papers are Anglican; the clear, but often only implicit, Newtorian and Neo-Nestorian influences may be found frequently in the Roman Catholic titles; and the Protestants represented are, almost without exception, persons who have either come from the Radical Reformation groups or, with training in Magisterial Reformation groups, come out of that and into a perspective approximating the Radical Reformation with its radical incarnational theology. The Radical Reformers, themselves, were only rarely scholars of the so-called "patristic" period: they more often based themselves solely on the Bible and on the very early apostolic and primitive Church. Thus their radical incarnationalism was, generally speaking, arrived at by direct Biblical exegesis: rather than by any Nestorian influence per se. Such is the abiding witness of Holy Scripture to a Gospel of radical incarnationalism and the Kingdom.)

To return to the question of Evangelical Catholicism itself: even after the break of 1903, the Evangelical Catholic Communion remained in a somewhat loose peace and communion with the Patriarchate of the Holy Catholic Church of the East and the Apostles, until Mar Jacobus death in 1938 and for some short time afterwards. That such peace and communion continued after the break is amply attested to by the following letter from the Catholicos-Patriarch, Mar Benjamin Shimun, which was printed in the Oxford Times of 7 March 1914 to clarify the question of Evangelical Catholic Orders: "To the Right Reverend Mar Yaqueb (Jacobus), Bishop, peace and blessing in our Lord Christ.

"Your letter written on the 25th August (of the Westerns) 1913, was received by us on the 3rd December (of the Easterns) 1913. Concerning the questions which you asked us to answer about the manner of the consecration of the late eminent Mar Abd-Ishu, Metropolitan of India &c, as it is known to us we will write to your Lordship.

"1. The late eminent Mar Abd-Ishu of India was ordained and consecrated Bishop and full Metropolitan of his Holiness, my late uncle Mar Shimun Reuben, Patriarch, in the Holy Church of Mar Saba in Upper Tiari.

"2. In the year of Christ 1862, on the Third Sunday in Advent, the 17th December (of the Easterns).

"3. In the consecration of this above-mentioned Metropolitan there were no other Bishops present except the Consecrator, the Patriarch Mar Reuben, and, of course, the Archdeacon and a large number of Priests and Deacons.

"4. The Metropolitan Mar Abd-Ishu had full power and authority, by the consecration which he received from the Patriarch, to bind and to loose and to ordain and consecrate, Bishops and Priests and other clergy as he might find necessary for the work of the Church.

"We hope that what we have written will be sufficient for your purpose. Written in Qudshanis in the Patriarchal Cell, on 17th December, in the

year of Christ 1913. By the Grace of God Benjamin Shimun, Patriarch of the East."

The above letter was sent by Mar Benjamin Shimun to Mar Jacobus to confirm the validity of the historic episcopate within apostolical succession possessed by Mar Jacobus and the Evangelical Catholic Communion. Antonios, Mar Abd-Ishu, Metropolitan of India who had been consecrated by Mar Shimun XVIII Reuben, Patriarch of the East in 1962 (as referred to in the above), in turn consecrated Mar Basilius (Suarez) in 1899 for the continuation of the Syro-Chaldean Church in the Metropolitan Province earlier named. He, in turn, consecrated Mar Jacobus (Ulric Vernon Herford) in 1902.

(For those who are of a mind to be concerned about whether churches and jurisdictions outside of our own peace and communion recognise and accept the Holy Orders derived through Mar Jacobus, it may be of some interest to note that so far as we know, of the various "independent Catholic" bodies in England and America, it is only Presbyters of this Communion who have been, upon their conversion to Rome, been accepted as Priests thereof without having to undergo any conditional ordination--unlike all English and American "Old Catholics, Independent Orthodox, Anglicans, &c." The well-known case of the Reverend Dr. William Orchard, personal Chaplain to Mar Jacobus and pastor of the Evangelical Catholic congregation at Kings Weigh House is one clear example thereof.)

It is incumbent upon us, then, to give some specific background on the radical incarnational theology of the Syro-Chaldean (or Nestorian) tradition.

Prior to the influence from the Presbyterian, Anglican and Roman Catholic missions which corrupted the Nestorian witness within the Patriarchate and contributed to the Separation (between the Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholic Communion and the Holy Catholic Church of the East and the Apostles); and yet, as recently as 1867, when Mar Shimun Reuben (above referred to) was invited by the Chaldean Uniate Roman Catholic Patriarch to enter into that church's unity, he justly replied: "You invite me to kiss humbly the slipper of the Bishop of Rome; but is he not, in every respect, a man like yourself--is his dignity superior to yours?" (Please note, this was three years before the "Old Catholic" rebellion against Rome on similar grounds at Vatican Council I. The Patriarch continued:) "We will never permit to be introduced into our holy temples of worship images and statues, which are nothing but abominable and impure idols. What! Shall we attribute to Almighty God a mother, as you dare to do? Away from us, such blasphemy!"

As a contemporary philosopher puts it, "Nestorians do not believe that God has a mother--and that strikes at the roots of the nuclear family." (Frederick Rabenstein)

Historically, the Syro-Chaldean (Aisor) tradition was established by the apostles Thomas, Thaddeus and Simon Peter and Saints Addai and Mari of the 70 holy disciples. The theology of the tradition stresses the two natures of Christ, holding that in Jesus of Nazareth the Christ was two persons and two natures, united in one prosopon (presence and will). Therefore, the tradition insists, our Lady Mary should not be called Theotokos (Bearer or Mother of God), insofar as she did not give birth to the Divinity of Christ but to the humanity, the temple of Divinity. Accordingly, she is Christotokos (Bearer or Mother of Christ). It has been suggested by some of the more radical theologians within the tradition, that the term should, even more properly, be Jesutokos (Bearer or Mother of Jesus): but that is a distinct minority position within the tradition. Further, the tradition clearly holds that it was the humanity in Jesus

that died on Calvary, not the Divinity in Christ.

It is, perhaps, necessary (or at least useful) at this time, to amplify on this by reference.

St. Nestorius wrote of Christ: "Because in fact He took this (humanity) in order to abolish the guilt of the first man and in order to give his nature the former image which he had lost through his guilt, rightly He took that which had proved itself guilty and had been made captive and had been subjected to servitude, with all the bonds of scorn and contempt." (Nestorius, The Bazaar of Heracleides, trans. by Driver, Oxford University Press 1925). Bishop John A. T. Robinson comments on this, "The account which the Epistle to the Hebrews gives of Jesus as a man who 'has been tested every way' as we are, who was 'beset by weakness' and who 'in the days of his earthly life...offered up prayers and petitions, with loud cries and tears' and 'because of his humble submission...was heard', clearly points to a man of common clay with ourselves." (Robinson, The Human Face of God, Westminster, 1973).

St. Theodore of Mopsuestia (called the Interpreter) wrote: "Suppose as you would have it, that the Deity took the role of the nous (or soul) in Him who was assumed. How was He affected with fear in His suffering? Why, in the face of immediate need, did He stand in want of vehement prayers--prayers which, as the blessed Paul (sc. the author to the Hebrews) says, He brought before God with a loud and clamorous voice and with many tears? How was He seized of such immense fear that He gave forth fountains of sweat by reason of His great terror?" (Theodore, Hom. Cat. 5.10)

Again, St. Theodore wrote: "He had an inclination, which was not by chance, towards the good because of His union with God the Word. He was also accounted worthy of this (union) by the foreknowledge of God the Word, who united Himself with Him from above. Thus, because of all this, He kept straightway with discretion a great hatred of evil, and with boundless love He fixed himself upon good. And receiving a power in accord with the fitting purpose (of the divine economy) and receiving the co-operating energy (synergeian) of God the Word, He kept steadfast for the rest (of His ministry) from changing for the worse. On the one hand, this was a purpose He held Himself; and, on the other hand, it was something He kept faithfully according to the purpose and by the co-operating energy of God." (Theodore, quoted in J. P. Migne, Patrologia Graeca (Paris 1857-66, vol 66); in English, R. A. Greer, Theodore of Mopsuestia: Exegete and Theologian, Faith Press, 1961.)

As Bishop Robinson puts it: "The question is what is really being asserted in saying...that he (Christ Jesus) is 'very God of very God'. At heart it is what John Hick has perhaps not very felicitously called the 'numerical identity' between his love and God's love--that he is homoagape, of one Love, with the Father. In other words, what Jesus was and did was the direct expression and implementation of God in action; not simply, in Austin Farrer's phrase, a man doing 'human things divinely' but a man doing 'divine things humanly.'" (John A.T. Robinson, The Human Face of God, op cit.) Or, indeed, as Dr. Pittinger put it: "As a man... he wore our humanity as a royal garment." (Norman Pittinger, God in Process, SCM Press, 1967).

This Antiochene approach to Christology is well stated by St. Theodore the Interpreter in his Commentary on the Nicene Creed: "In this they (our blessed parents and forerunners in the faith) showed us the gift of his grace which they saw in the human race, and through which he assumed a man from us, was in him and dwelt in him, and they taught us that he

endured and bore all according to human nature so that we might understand that he was not a man in appearance only, but that he was a real man." (Comm. in Symb. Nic. 7; ed. A Mingana, Woodbrooke Studies V, Cambridge University Press, 1932.)

Likewise, the Tome of the Council of Constantinople in 381, reflecting the views of St. Diodore of Tarsus, says: "For the salvation of us human beings he took from us a complete human and dwelt in him."

Again, Bishop Robinson comments: "...men like Theodore and Nestorius really were arguing (as we can now see) for a genuine and deeply personal union of God and man in Christ--however inadequate their vocabulary...."

"Translating into modern terms their concern for a union that depended on moral volition rather than automatic substance, Pittenger puts it like this: 'The most complete, the fullest, the most organic and integrated union of Godhead and manhood which is conceivable is precisely one in which by gracious indwelling of God in man and by manhood's free response in surrender and love, there is established a relationship which is neither accidental nor incidental, on the one hand, nor mechanical and physical on the other; but a full, free, gracious unity of the two in Jesus Christ, who is both the farthest reach of God the Word into the life of man and also (and by consequence) the richest response of man to God.' (Pittenger, The Word Incarnate, Harper & Row and SCM Press)

"There is no contradiction between a man 'living' God and God 'living' a man. For, as Nestorius put it, in words that St John would have approved, to have 'the prosōpon of God' (or, as we should say, to be the personal expression of God) 'is to will what God wills, whose prosōpon he has.' (The Bazaar of Heracleides.) And for that, to be fully and independently a man is an essential qualification, not a disqualification." (Robinson, The Human Face of God, op cit.)

The Jesuit Grillmeier defends Nestorius, saying: "It is because the very act of taking a human nature comes from above that Nestorius lays so much stress on its freedom and character of grace. The Incarnation is not a necessary natural fact, a henosis kata physin, but a free disposal by the divine dispensation (oikonomia). Christ is therefore a henosis kat' oikonomian or kat' eudokian, or kata charin.... (These expressions) are not meant to loosen the unity in Christ; they merely stress the divine freedom in the work of the Incarnation." (Aloys Grillmeier, S.J., Christ in Christian Tradition, Mowbrays, 1965)

Again, Pittenger puts it thus: "Emergent humanity is itself the instrument for expressive Deity; the Word is made flesh, in one of our own kind, our Brother, without over-riding or denying the humanity which is ours, but rather crowning and completing all that is implicit in humanity from its very beginning. The divine intention...is 'enmanned' among us." (Pittenger, The Word Incarnate, op cit.)

And Robinson writes: "It has been well said that the major contribution of Nestorius to Christology was precisely to explicate the prosōpon, the face or person, of God in Jesus Christ in terms of eikōn or image." (Robinson, The Human Face of God, op cit.)

Nestorius writes, for instance: "God dwells in Christ and perfectly reveals himself to men (sic) through him. Yet the two prosōpa are really one because both the humanity and the divinity are the image of God." (Nestorius, The Bazaar of Heracleides, emphasis Robinson's)

All of this data from Diodorus, Theodore and Nestorius clearly confronts both the Magisterial Reformation and its modern Neo-Orthodox interpreters with precisely the claims of a radical incarnational theology, a radical Christian and Biblical humanism, that much of the Radical Reformation and Erasmus' and Juan de Valdes' call for "Evangelical Catholicism" in the

XVth century spoke of. In dealing with this question of contemporary Neo-Orthodoxy and Barthian Calvinism from a Neo-Nestorian perspective, Bishop Robinson writes: "Why Barth and others are so concerned to deny Jesus' independent existence as a human being apart from God I shall return to consider later....But I am persuaded that the truth at stake can be preserved without the theory that Jesus had no human personality (or, by the later refinement of enhypostasia, that this was somehow included in his divine personhood). This theory was strongly contested by the Antiochenes as destructive of his humanity, and I am sure they were right. (Cf. the judgment of Telfer: 'Only the 'Antiochene' school protested against 'anhypostatic manhood', and it was the finally condemned Theodore of Mopsuestia who saw clearly that unless 'the man' in Christ was so far individual as to experience the temptation to pride, the soteriological canon remained unsatisfied. Because this was so, Chalcedon failed to prevent a modified Apollinarianism from becoming the orthodoxy of the Middle Ages' ((Journal of Theological Studies, NS V).) Bonhoeffer dubbed it (the doctrine of enhypostasia or anhypostatic manhood) 'the last refuge of docetism'. (Bonhoeffer, Christology).....

"In contrast, the Reformed tradition held to the traditional but sterile finitum non est capax infiniti....As Cyril put it, 'He economically allowed the measures of humanity to have power over himself'. (Quod unus sit Christus) Even so recent and so humanistic a writer as Seely could speak in his Ecce Homo of 'Christ's abstinence from the use of his supernatural power as a device by which he avoided certain inconveniences which would have arisen from the free use of it.'

"...this whole way of thinking strikes us as irremediably docetic. It has the effect of making Jesus a sort of centaur or bat-man, a hybrid conjunction of two strange species, and we start asking questions such as we ask of the incarnations of the Greek gods, 'Did they have ichor in their veins or blood?' (I would therefore agree...that the expression 'God-man' must be avoided, as impossible to safeguard against misrepresentation. Pittenger's 'God-in-Man' is much nearer to scripture).....

"As van Buren paraphrases Barth's meaning, 'Jesus was indeed a man as we are men, but the fact that he existed as a man was totally dependent on the fact that God the Word, the eternal Logos, had called him into being to be the historical bearer of the divine Word' (Paul van Buren, 'The Dissolution of the Absolute', Theological Explorations, SCM Press, 1968). But this does not mean that he could not also be 'taken' out of countless millions. For he is elected not for exclusive privilege but for representative service." (Robinson, The Human Face of God, op cit.)

In his earlier preaching against docetism, Saint Ignatius of Antioch made the issue crystal-clear: "Therefore be deaf when any person speaks to you apart from Jesus Christ, who was of the race of David, who was the Son of Mary, who was truly born and ate and drank, was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died in the sight of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the earth; who moreover was truly raised from the dead, His Father having raised Him, who in like fashion will also raise us who believe on Him--His Father, I say, will raise us--in Christ Jesus, apart from whom we have not true life." (St. Ignatius of Antioch: Ad. Smyrn viii.)

In his history of the church, Walker writes: "...he (Nestorius) would not admit that there were in Christ two persons--the doctrine with which he was charged. "With the one name Christ we designate at the same time two natures....The essential characteristics in the nature of the divinity and in the humanity are from all eternity distinguished....

"God the Word is also named Christ because He has always conjunction

with Christ. And it is impossible for God the Word to do anything without the humanity, for all is planned upon an intimate conjunction, not on the deification of the humanity.' Nestorius would emphasize the reality and completeness of the human in the Christian's Lord....Nestorius declared his faith in 'both natures which by the highest and unmixed union are adored in the one person of the Only Begotten.'" (Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church, New York 1930)

Likewise, Green writes: "To eradicate what might remain of Apollinarianism, Nestorius was accustomed so constantly to urge...(that)...Mary was the mother of our Lord's human nature--not in any sense of His Divinity.... She is Christotokos, insisted Nestorius and his followers, Mother of the Man Christ Jesus; for the Divinity can neither be born nor die." (Samuel G. Green, A Handbook of Church History from the Apostolic Era to the Dawn of the Reformation, London, 1904.)

To close this immediate section on the ancient and traditional teaching of the Syro-Chaldean (Aisor) Church, which has been carried on in our time by Mar Jacobus and his successors in the Evangelical Catholic Communion, it is perhaps wise to quote one of the propers from the Divine Liturgy of the Apostles Mar Addai and Mari, a Proper for the Feast of the Greek--or Antiochene--Doctors, Saints Diodorus, Theodore and Nestorius, which is celebrated on the fifth Friday after the Epiphany. Immediately following the Creed, on that day, they repeat: "Woe and woe again to all who say that God died, who say that Mary is the mother of God, who do not confess Christ in two natures, two persons, and one parsufa of filiation. Woe and woe again to the wicked Cyril and Severus."

After this perhaps overly-long, but apparently necessary, survey of the historic theological perspective of Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholicism, let us return to the contemporary situation.

After Mar Jacobus' death in 1938, the bishops that he had consecrated began working more closely than he had ever done, with various "independent Catholic" bishops in England. This caused not only a compromise of the positions of Evangelical Catholicism with various heretical views, from a Syro-Chaldean and radical incarnational perspective (both theologically and socially); but due to a strange ecclesiological position which runs, like a plague, through "independent Catholicism", putting more emphasis on so-called "apostolic succession" via the historic episcopate than on a succession of the True Faith handed down the ages from the apostles, it also led to a very strange admixture of the historic episcopate tracing from the Syro-Chaldean Church with that of various groups derived from Old Catholicism, Roman Catholicism, Monophysitism, Byzantine Orthodoxy, and Anglicanism. This was due to the acceptance, by the immediate British successors of Mar Jacobus (although not by Mar Jacobus himself) of an ecclesiological position put forward by the Most Reverend Hugh George de Willmott-Newman (Mar Georgius) concerning "oecumenical apostolic succession restored through conditional reconsecration from various lines of succession"; a position which clearly denies the efficacy of the Holy Spirit in conveying the fullness of the episcopate regardless of which line of historic episcopate is validly obtained.

As a result of this highly irregular theory (adhered to today by no one except little groups seeking to combine various aspects of "neognosticism" with a Christian sacramental cover, and thus reconstituting a most dangerous revival of unabashed docetism), Syro-Chaldean lines of apostolic succession within the historic episcopate were compromised by admixture with groups with which Evangelical Catholicism has little or nothing in common theologically or, for that matter, as far as social vision goes.

In 1960, I was consecrated within this mixed line of the so-called

"oecumenical apostolic succession" by the Most Reverend Christopher Maria Stanley at Louisville, Kentucky, while I was the guest of Anne and Carl Braden. Although I was consecrated, at that time, to continue the work of the Eucharistic Catholic Church (Antiochian), the New York and Philadelphia Missions of which I had been ordained for in 1957 by the Most Reverend George Augustine Hyde, having been licensed for the same in 1955--since Archbishop Hyde had, at that time, renounced his public ministry in and to the Gay Community and the New York-Philadelphia (and London) Missions had separated from him; cast off on our own we made many serious errors. In the first place, in our own attempts, at that time, to return to the basis of apostolic and primitive Christianity, we stupidly adopted the dual name of Eucharistic Catholic Church--Gnostic Catholic Church. Although we tried to make it clear in our literature (but not clear enough, apparently) that the gnosis we spoke of was the Christian gnosis taught by such as Saints Gregory of Nyssa, Clement of Alexandria and Origen (all of whom, strangely enough, are among the most sexist teachers of the "patristic period", so called)--and not that of the clearly heretical pseudo-gnostics such as Basilides, Valentinus, Simon Magus, &c.

Strangely enough, the docetic elements pervading the entire Alexandrian theology of Clement and Origen almost do qualify these "fathers" as being "gnostic" in the worst sense of the word. During that same "patristic" period, it is the Antiochian theology of Diodorus, Theodore and Nestorius which is most concrete, most incarnational and, therefore, most thoroughly the continuation of the radical Biblical teaching of the apostolic and primitive period (as shown by the section above dealing with them and with our contemporary Neo-Nestorianism).

Mea maxima culpa! We were not sufficiently aware of the necessary distinctions at the time, and so our theological stance was at direct odds with our social stance and work in the world and in the movement for peace, freedom and human dignity in a society transformed by the Spirit of God-in-Christ into a community of sister/brotherhood in Christ--the Kingdom of God.

Quite justifiably, our consecrator became terror-stricken at the term "Gnostic Catholic," and assumed the worst. Therefore, by mutual agreement, intercommunion was broken between Archbishop Stanley and the Byzantine Primitive Catholic Church of Antioch and the Eucharistic Catholic Church--Gnostic Catholic.

In 1963, after having studied much of the writing of Mar Jacobus (although, at that time, not having studied the Syro-Chaldean or Nestorian sources themselves, sufficiently), we reorganized the body as the Brotherhood of the Love of Christ: Evangelical Catholic Communion (later renamed Community of the Love of Christ to overcome the implicit sexism of the earlier name): a continuation of the Work of Mar Jacobus and the Order of the Christian Faith. From the mixed grab-bag of the "oecumenical apostolic succession" in which we participated by consecration, we put our primary emphasis on the succession derived from the Syro-Chaldean Church via the Evangelical Catholic Communion: and devoted the Order to the restitutio apostolica spoken of by the radical reformers and by Mar Jacobus; and, specifically, to a restoration of the Work of the Evangelical Catholic Communion as it was held in Mar Jacobus' day.

That same year, the Brotherhood of the Love of Christ received Charter also from the Most Reverend Friedrich Heiler of Marburg, Germany: to serve as the American Missions of the Evangelical-Eucharistic Catholic Communion. This body, strange to say, although its lines of succession were primarily Monophysite, held instead to a radical incarnational

theology which might be defined as Neo-Nestorianism within the context of Lutheran Sacramentalism (cf. Heiler, Prayer: Its History and Psychology, Oxford University Press-Galaxybook and several papers in the Eranos Yearbooks, Bollingen Foundation, Princeton University Press.) The Evangelical-Eucharistic Catholic Communion in Germany, at the time of the Nazi domination, was the radical liturgical and apostolic witness within the Anti-Nazi Confessing Church. Thus the Evangelical Catholic Communion, functioning as the American branch of that German body, was also known as the Evangelical-Eucharistic Catholic Observance; thus, by the grace of God, also continuing our earlier use of the name Eucharistic Catholic, and from a source antedating the 1946 establishment of the Eucharistic Catholic Church by Archbishop Hyde in Atlanta, Georgia by fifteen years.

(However, as a result of the conflict with Archbishop Stanley, he had begun a confusing policy of sometimes denying and sometimes affirming our consecration at his hands. Therefore, in 1965, in order to ensure an undoubted succession for the Order and Communion, we received conditional consecration from the Most Reverend Lawrence Francois Pierre. That consecration, however, included only lines that were Byzantine Orthodox and Monophysite, and not the full so-called "oecumenical apostolic succession." That, in itself, did not matter: insofar as we no longer held to that peculiar ecclesiological theory. What did matter, as we went forward to try to renew and restore the work of Evangelical Catholicism, was that it did not include the succession from the Syro-Chaldean Church through Mar Jacobus. Therefore, when the Most Reverend Leo Christopher Skelton, who was at that time coadjutor to Archbishop Stanley, offered conditional reconsecration in the full "oecumenical apostolic succession," we accepted and in 1965, we were conditionally consecrated with lines which include those tracing from Mar Jacobus. Since that time, we have again listed those as our primary lines of succession.)

In 1968, the Evangelical Catholic Communion was the first apostolic and liturgical body other than the Mariavite Old Catholics of Poland, and the very first Eastern-Rite and Nestorian apostolic and liturgical body, to break through the centuries of patriarchalism and male-domination, and freely ordain Women to Holy Orders on a basis of full and absolute equality in the Spirit of God-in-Christ. This, of course, is the full and logical development of the radical incarnational theology and radical Biblical witness of the Syro-Chaldean teaching, when divorced from the historic and culture-bound conditionings of the "patristic" period and the middle ages.

Although a separation happened between the Community of the Love of Christ and the larger body of Evangelical Catholicism in 1969, largely due to differences in interpretation of the incarnational and Biblical perspective of the tradition in regard to the social implications of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, that rift has been healed in recent months. After four years of much discussion, prayer, and conversations with many of our clerics, professed religious and communicants, the Community of the Love of Christ has renounced its historic claims of primatial jurisdiction within the Evangelical Catholic Communion. We have, personally, announced not only our resignation from all primatial jurisdiction previously held, as well as our refusal to accept any primatial jurisdiction in the future: but we function simply as Bishop-Abbot of the Community of the Love of Christ. That body, which defines itself as "a radical, ecumenical, liturgical and apostolic Religious Order" has made its formal submission, and been accepted) by the reuniting body of THE SYRO-CHALDEAN EVANGELICAL CATHOLIC COMMUNION, also known as

the Evangelical-Eucharistic Catholic Observance. The Metropolitan of Baltimore and Episcopal Chancellor of the Evangelical Catholic Communion, the Most Reverend Marlin Paul Bausum Ballard (Mar Paulus), who is so graciously hosting this Convocation, functions as Bishop Primus pro tem of the reuniting body.

The projection is that after every effort at full reunification within the Syro-Chaldean and Evangelical Catholic traditions and succession is made, and all unifications and/or establishments of peace and communion with other jurisdictions that can be expected within a reasonable period are accomplished, the reunited body will elect a regular Bishop Primus. (For our part, from the likely candidates we can see at the present time, we believe that Mar Paulus should at that time be confirmed and ratified in that Office.)

In the interim, however, it is essential for us to lay the foundation upon which this Work is to be restored: "Other foundation can no person lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11); "Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom you are also built together for a dwelling place of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:19-22); "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:18-19).

A filling out of the vision of Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholicism has been occurring, largely through the study of radical Biblical exegesis and the teaching of the Syro-Chaldean tradition. Despite the many errors and the incumbent fresh starts that have been made in the past, we believe that the present period will significantly expand the scope and character of both the Community of the Love of Christ and the Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholic Communion of which we are, once again, by the grace of God in the Spirit of Christ, a part. In order to translate our projections and hopes for the Communion into reality, we must evaluate where we are at and what we are aiming for. That is, of course, the question that this paper and, hopefully, this entire Convocation, will be addressing itself to.

What, then, can the Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholic Communion mean? It appears that we are called to:

- I. Establish a base for comprehensive Christian Witness in faithfulness and affirmation:
 1. Sharing of Faith issues.
 2. Renewal and restoration of the Syro-Chaldean and Radical Christian tradition of Evangelical Catholicism.
 3. Bearing witness to a radical incarnational and Biblical view of the Kingdom of God.
 4. Reaching those without a Faith commitment.
 5. Cooperation between local congregations; religious orders, dioceses and other provinces in spiritual life programs.
 6. Explicit expression of the desire for unity in the Church of Jesus Christ.
- II. Define channels of communication in openness and trust:
 1. Between local congregations and provincial judicatories as defined in I.5 above.
 2. With other Christian communities bearing witness to the radical Gospel of the Kingdom.

3. With other bodies of nominal Christians, bringing witness of the radical Gospel and the transforming Work of the Spirit of God-in-Christ breaking down boundaries and bringing into being the universal community of sister/brotherhood in the love of Christ.
 4. With coalitions for human liberation and coalitions on serving present-day and immediate human needs.
- III. Develop and maintain essential ministries in cooperation and ecumenical commitment:
1. Determine the future of programs which demand radical Christian involvement and broad ecumenical commitment; e.g., Ministry in and to Black, Third World, Feminist, Gay and other communities of people seeking liberation from oppressive social forces; radical pacifist commitment to nonviolent revolution; ministry to persons of special need as the physically, socially and "mentally" handicapped; ministry with farm workers; relief programs as clothing drives, hunger drives, social services ministries; and many others.
 2. To seek to work in a coordinated way with other religious bodies working in similar programs.
 3. To consolidate resources for effective and efficient mission work.
 4. To provide cooperative mission outreach with the radical Gospel of transforming love to those secular movements for radical social transformation which often serve as the church of Jesus Christ incognito.

In accord with the above, and for the consideration of the entire body of the Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholic Communion, we here present (not so much as a model for the entire body, but as an example of what one Province of the body, an Ecumenical Religious Order functioning within the Communion, holds), the following official statement of the Community of the Love of Christ:

"Love is the Spirit of this Community and Service is its Work. And this is our Way: to live together in Peace, to seek the Truth in Love, to help one another in Joy." (St. Basil the Great)

"The Community of the Love of Christ is an Ecumenical Religious Order for the spiritual renewal, consecration and transformation of humanity through the restoration of the Way of Living of the apostolic and primitive Church Catholic. We are committed to radical Christian discipleship, in which the proclamation 'Jesus our Brother is Christ, Lord and Liberator: Who died, Who rose, Who comes again!' is central because of its truth and its liberating and motivating power in people's lives. The Good News is the entrance of Jesus Christ into history, the inbreaking of a free and loving community of sister/brotherhood, the proclamation of a message of reconciliation, liberation and new life. The message of Christ and the Kingdom of God--the Liberated Community of Love--brings radical change to human life and society.

"We are called to proclaim to all the world the Gospel of Jesus our Brother and Liberator as the Call to make us free: 'to bring the Good News to the poor; to proclaim liberty to the captives, new vision to the unseeing, freedom to those in bondage, liberation to the oppressed, the time of the Lord's favor to all' (St. Luke 4:16-17).

"The Christ-Truth, the essential Teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, is the Good News of liberation, of freedom for all people. There can be no doubt of that if we carefully read the statements of Jesus preserved in the Gospels and in the apostolic writings of the period immediately following the earthly life of Jesus and through the first three centuries. There can

be no doubt as to the Teaching of Liberation, regardless of what mainstream institutional christendom has done to suppress the liberating Truth since 325 A.D. That Good News of liberation—the Gospel of Jesus—is speaking to us today. It is vital for freedom today, just as it spoke to and was vital to the liberation struggle of the 'despised and rejected' of Jesus' own day.

"Jesus said, 'I am come that they might have life, and have life more abundantly' (John 10:10). The Community of the Love of Christ is a covenant-fellowship, an ecumenical Order seeking to help the larger undivided church of which we are a part (and we refuse, as a matter of conviction by the Holy Spirit, to recognize 'denominational' divisions in that One Body), to find new ways to serve the people with the Good News of the 'life more abundant'—the Gospel of the Kingdom of God-in-Christ Jesus—in this present age.

"Walk down the streets of the city and take a moment out to talk with adolescent runaways, youth without homes, street-people, students and hustlers; with the aged, largely discarded by an affluent society; with women and gay people (male and female) oppressed by the bureaucratic structures and ideology of a sexist society; with black and third world people oppressed by the institutions and ideology of a racist society; with war-resisters and peacemakers who rightly feel that the institutional mainstream churches have betrayed the Gospel of liberation: and know in your gut the alienation of a world-wide cross-section of the people.

"It is precisely in this time and place that we are called by the Holy Spirit to participate in the radical life-style of love and service to the people taught by Jesus. Christians are called to be a people who will throw themselves into the breach between the peace and healing of God and the loneliness, anguish and terror of the world's lost. We are called to stand as a bridge between humanity and God; willing, even eager, to become ground grain, broken bread, crushed grapes, poured out wine to be fed upon by the earth's hungry until those hungry ones can feed directly upon Christ.

"Has not God's liberated community of love in Christ been promised to the poor and lowly? Was not the Liberator of the world a Carpenter and a Convict, Who died the ingnomious death of a Political Criminal: but rose again in glory for our sake?

"We come together to follow the risen and living Christ, 'the same yesterday, today and forever' (Heb. 13:9). We follow in the Way of Christ Jesus, Who is not a temple dweller nor imprisoned in cloistered sanctuaries, but the One Who has broken all bonds and is at work in all creation and alive in all persons. Our spiritual Work is in the midst of the world.

"In the Little Flowers of Saint Francis, it is recorded of 'the Poor One of Assisi's' first audience with the Bishop of Rome: 'Francis came armed with a parable. 'There was,' he said, 'a rich and mighty king who took to wife a poor but very beautiful woman, who lived in a desert, in whom he greatly delighted and by whom he had children who bore his image. When her sons had grown their mother said to them, 'My sons, be not ashamed; you are the children of a king.' And she sent them to court, having supplied them with all necessities. When they came to the king, he admired their beauty; and seeing in them some resemblance to himself, asked them, 'Whose sons are you?' And when they replied that they were the poor sons of a poor woman dwelling in the desert, the king, filled with much joy, said, 'Fear not, you are my children; and if I nourish strangers at my table, how much more you, who are my own children'.'"

"By this, Saint Francis spoke of the restoration of the Teaching and Way of Living of Christ Jesus and the apostolic and primitive Church Catholic. Even so today!

"The trumpet sound of Love is blasting against the church walls: to break down those walls and reveal whether any of the Love of God, the Kingdom of God, the Community of Love, is behind those walls. The Call of the Spirit to us today is to become an ecumenical and non-denominational alternative to the mainstream institutional churches--to seek to bring, in our day, the Good News of Christ's liberation to all people.

"In order to fulfill this mandate of the Will of God in the Spirit of Christ, the Church must return to its biblical roots and once again become an alternative community of the pilgrim people of God, sojourners in the world--not seeking for acceptance by mainstream Christendom, nor seeking merely to fill its own cash boxes: but becoming a servant community and a prophetic witness that confronts all oppression, greed and violence, speaking Truth to power, confronting 'the powers of wickedness in high places' (Eph. 6:12).

"While more often than not the mainstream institutional church sells out its Pearl of Great Price, the Gospel of Liberation taught by Jesus, to property, status and social position: an alternative community in Jesus' Way of Discipleship has in it the possibility of serving the people as steward of that Pearl. While the mainstream church often silences its witness rather than lose position and wealth: such an alternative community has the possibility of true witness in transforming love and service precisely because it has no wealth and no position. While the institutional church trades in the offensive Jesus for a more comfortable model: such an alternative community has the possibility of being the Body of Christ which was taught by Jesus, Who was the Friend of the outcast and the oppressed, the Enemy of all oppression. While the mainstream institutional church makes of the scandal of the cross an idol to be worshipped from a comfortable pew (and so denies the power of the Resurrection): such an alternative community has in it the possibility of being disciples of Jesus and proclaiming the Gospel--which is an outrageous shout of Love that smashes all idols down, purges the temple of moneychangers and rends the veil of the sanctuary.

"The focus of the Community of the Love of Christ must be upon those who are poor, who are oppressed. Christ Jesus is the great liberator: Who died for us, and rose again, conquering death, that we might live.

"Jesus calls all! Jesus calls the oppressed to liberation in the new life; the oppressor to give up the role of oppressor--'sell all you have and give it to the poor' (Luke 18:22)--and in this giving up the oppressor's role, to identify with the people by service. It is in our helping others that we help ourselves the most!

"With historic roots in, and episcopate derived from, The Holy Catholic Church of the East and the Apostles through the Metropolitan Province of India, Ceylon, Milapur, Socotra, Messina and the English Missions of The Syro-Chaldean (Aisor) Evangelical Catholic Communion (also known as The Evangelical-Eucharistic Catholic Observance), we come together to restore the apostolic revolution of transforming and liberating Love meaningfully for contemporary humanity; to do the Work of the renewed Christ-Teaching in our age for the spiritual renewal, consecration and transformation of humanity and the world; to fulfill the need of our age for radical Christian discipleship--'Yes, a Christian revolutionary! And not a revolutionary who happens to be a Christian or in spite of being a Christian, but revolutionary because Christian!' (Eric Gill).

"We, therefore, strive to become revolutionary Christians, a community of people united in love and dedicated to creating a new world by the grace of God in Christ--a society based on trust, cooperation and sharing. We believe the essential message of the apostolic and undivided Church of Christ to be that people take priority over things or profits, that Jesus'

teachings take on meaning only in concrete actions that meet people's material and spiritual needs, and that the church as a community must work on all levels to meet those needs. In the end, God is not for organisations. God is for people! The organisation--the church--is only to bring the Love of God to the people. As Tullio Vinay said, at a Waldensian retreat, "The Church's task is not to save itself--Jesus has already done that. It is rather to give itself in love and service--in fact, to die for the world."

"The voice of God in the Spirit of Christ calls to us today--'I am asking for bread: will you continue to give My people stones?'

"The world-crisis today demands that the Cross be raised again at the centre of the people's struggle for a liberated and transformed world for all--gay and non-gay; women and men; black, third world and white--and not merely on the steeple of the church. Jesus was not crucified in an elaborate church-building between two candles: but on a Cross between two thieves or political prisoners (crucifixion having been reserved for political 'enemies of the state', often called 'thieves' by those whose class-privilege they threaten); at the town garbage-heap; at a cross-roads so cosmopolitan that they had to write Jesus' title in three languages; at the kind of place where cynics talk smut and thieves curse and soldiers gamble. That is where Jesus died, and that is what Jesus died about: and that is where the Community of Jesus must be and what the Community of Jesus must be about--the bringing into being a liberated community of sister/brotherhood in the Love of Christ!

"Believing that we must be a part of all struggles for human liberation--Good News to the poor, release to the captives, sight to the blind, liberty to the oppressed--and hoping to help one another grow and find the life abundant, The Community of the Love of Christ welcomes as members all people who share our goals and beliefs and who are willing to take responsibility for making them a reality in the life of the Church Universal." (An Introduction to The Community of the Love of Christ, from The Way of Discipleship or Rule, revised 1976).

Fundamental to Evangelical Catholicism, both in its earlier phase as a particular teaching during the Radical Reformation (as described above), and in its later phase as the Western extension of the Syro-Chaldean tradition, is the understanding of the church's biblical identity as a new community of radical incarnational faith, which is called to be a sign of the Kingdom of God in history, an alien society of God's people whose life and action is intended to play a prophetic and decisive role in the world. Mar Jacobus specifically held that radical Biblical view of Christology, dealt with above, up to the "free churches" of England which adhered to the Magisterial Reformation, when he said: "What we want to impress upon the Free Churches is that there is a 'Depositum' which we have loyally to hand on, which is not an open question, and we have this in the Christo-centric theology of the New Testament." (Quoted by Tull, Vernon Herford: Apostle of Unity, Editions Pelerin, 1958).

This vision of the church was present in our inception as an Order in embryonic form in 1898; and has since grown to be basic and foundational to the purposes of the Community of the Love of Christ as well as the larger Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholic Communion of which we are a part, and which itself now seeks, at this Pentecost Convocation, for Christian renewal.

From the outset of our foundation in England as the Western Missions of the Syro-Chaldean Church, we have felt it was most essential that Christians rediscover their Biblical identity and learn to live not as the children of this age, but as the children of God.

Boyd says: "The mark of Christian is the relationship between a person or a community with Jesus Christ. He lived and died without secular power. He called society to judgment and redemption. He evidenced a clearly alternative life-style. He was executed by the state. Indeed, Jesus simply doesn't fit at all neatly into the modern Establishment church as we know it. Even now, however, one recognizes the presence of Jesus Christ in scattered pockets of humanity, in experiments of love and justice, in efforts to achieve communities, and in various human groupings that bypass the citadels of self-contradictory power in the world." (Malcolm Boyd, Christian: Its Meanings in an Age of Future Shock, Hawthorn, 1975). This is but another example of the growing edge of a radical incarnational theology that bears the hall-mark of a Neo-Nestorian revival: particularly in certain Anglican circles. Obviously, however, it does not go far enough without a full renewal of the Biblical call that the apostolic and primitive Church, and the early theologians of the Antiochene School, put forth.

Biblically, the people of God are called to live in the world as strangers, pilgrims, aliens, and sojourners because of their sole loyalty to and citizenship in the Kingdom of God; because of their identity as those who have entered into God's new thing, God's new order of things.

However, contrary to the distortions of separatist fundamentalism and other sectarian groups (which, in various ways, participate in the docetic heresy), the Biblical injunction to live as a separate people is not an excuse to withdraw from involvement in the world but, rather, is the style of participation in the world that is most needed and most decisive. It is a way of loving and serving the world without conforming to it: "Be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2).

If we wish to be used of God, we must not be afraid of being called "peculiar." If the world have not much to say against us, depend upon it God will have little to say for us; wherefore, the apostle says, "But you are...a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Christ who has called you out of darkness into God's marvellous Light" (1 Pet. 2:9); "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2:14; cf. Deut. 14:2; 26:18).

By living as a separate people, a remnant called unto God-in-Christ by the Spirit, we are witnesses to the power of the Kingdom in history and participate in the revolution of human life and society which is begun and completed by Jesus Christ. The simple purpose of Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholicism and Evangelical-Eucharistic Catholicism, at this time when the Spirit of God-in-Christ is calling us towards unity and renewal, should be--as it was in Mar Jacobus' and Bishop Heiler's day--to serve in the rebuilding of the Church Universal by taking our part in God's plan and redeeming the times through the life and faith of Biblical people.

Biblical studies, theological analysis and reflection will, undoubtedly, continue to play a key role in the Communion: but we must be about the Biblical gut-level work of serving the people with the Good News of Liberation. Unlike some neo-gnostic or docetic cult, the Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholic Communion, firm in its commitment to an incarnational understanding of Christianity and to the Work of the transformation of humanity and the world in accord with the Will of God and the Spirit of Christ-- must be calling people not just to ideas but to a way of living and action that can be seen, experienced and entered into.

We therefore submit the following publication from our Order for the consideration of the entire Communion:

THE REBEL JESUS

The Way of Jesus is too severe for those who would compromise with the way of exploitation (Luke 14:27). That is the reason there is a religion *about* Jesus (Matt. 15:8). Jesus Himself said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6).

The Way of Jesus and the Prophets is a Way of, by and for the oppressed peoples of the world (Luke 6:20). That is why sexist and racist oppressors hate it (John 14:30) and the reason agents of oppression pay theologians to rip-off the Way and come up with a religion *about* Jesus and the Prophets and the next life (11 Tim. 4:3). The prophetic faith has no good word to nor for oppressors and tyrants (Ex. 9:1). It condemns all oppressors (Isa. 3:15) and demands that the people be freed from bondage (Ex. 5:1) and have land and houses (Isa. 5:8), food, clothes and health (Matt. 25:31-46) and freedom (John 8:32) to usher in the new age, the reign of the people (Dan. 7:27).

We live today as in the time of Daniel, when the handwriting is on the wall. "You have praised the gods of silver and gold, of iron and bronze, of wood and stone, which neither see nor know, and you have not given glory to God, in whose charge is your very breath and whose hands are all your ways. This is why that hand was sent from God's presence and why it wrote this inscription: *Mene, mene, tekel upharsin*. Here is the interpretation: *mene*—God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end; *tekel*—you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting; *upharsin*—your nation has been divided and given away from you" (Dan. 5:23-28). Babylon must fall!

Thousands of years before the People called the conflict between oppression and freedom by their rightful name—the fight between sexism, racism and imperialism on the one hand and peace, human dignity and freedom on the other—the prophets and Jesus were teaching that Babylon—the State—must fall (Isa. 9:6). They worked to turn this world system right side up (Luke 1:52); to correct the extremes of sexual, racial and class division (Gal. 3:28), of wealth and poverty, by making the first last and the last first (Matt. 19:30).

The Bible reveals that throughout history God has been with the people (Isa. 62:12), leading the struggle against tyranny (Isa. 61:1-11) and for freedom and righteousness (Isa. 65:21-25). In the fullness of time there were raised up many organizers of the people (Ex. 10-11) among the oppressed multitudes (Ex. 3:6-10). The history of the Jewish people made it possible for Jesus of Nazareth, our Brother, to become Liberator for all people (Matt. 9:36-38) and to start a Movement for a universal and free Community (Luke 14:15) on earth (Matt. 6:10) for all that labor and are heavy-laden and need rest (Matt. 11:28).

When Mary knew that she was to become the Mother of Jesus, she declared her solidarity with those of low-estate, the oppressed; and rejoiced that she was to have part in the divine liberation program for the people (Luke 1:46-54).

Jesus became aware of oppressive conditions early (Luke 2:40) and at the age of 12 confounded the theologians who had forgotten to apply their religion towards the liberation of the people—by His understanding of the issues at stake (Luke 2:41-47). After this, He worked with Joseph at the carpenter's bench until He was about 30 (Luke, chaps. 1-3). Jesus learned at first hand the problems of the people, becoming the Servant of the People (Phil. 2:7).

The historical age of Jesus witnessed violence against personal integrity and against social classes comparable to today's violence. In the absence of technology, the age of Jesus did not see a comparable violence against the ecology. But the symbolism of the end of the world which Jesus used as a basis for the ethic of His revolutionary Way shows His prophetic insight that comparable violence against nature was both possible and likely. To defeat this set-up He knew that all the oppressed people must be united as One (Matt. 5:5) into a world Community (Matt. 13:38) without regard to sex, race, tribe or tongue (Luke 13:29).

The Servant of the People was the open and up-front spokesperson for an international underground. He spoke in a symbolic language about the insurrection of the just, when the poor would rise from the tomb of slavery in world-wide non-violent revolution, throw off the yoke of the State and establish the reign of the People. In the Bible, just, poor and righteous are synonymous terms; also wicked, rich, unrighteous.

Jesus came to save the oppressed, to relate to those whom society has cast out and to be a model for their liberation. He did not say "Get on your knees and worship me"; He said "Follow me." He identified with the outcast and the oppressed, and said He came "to bring life more abundant" (John 10:10), "to bring the Good News to the poor; to proclaim liberty to the captives, new vision to the unseen, freedom to those in bondage, liberation to the oppressed, the Time of Liberation to All" (Luke 4:18). Above all, He held up self-giving Love in the service of the People as the commandment to both challenge and perfect all commandments.

Although Jesus, by His presence with the revolutionaries of His day, recognized the justice of their cause, every bit of His Teaching and Lifestyle consistently proclaims that the liberated society will be created only through reconciling, creative and non-violent Love. To be effective in this struggle, Jesus recognized that it was necessary to involve *all of the people* (Matt. 23:13) and He openly stated that He would include in this revolutionary community people from all groups, as Elias and Elishus had done in the time of famine and plague (Luke 4:25-27). He took His cause directly to Gays (the Centurion, John the Beloved, Lazarus); Women (Mary & Martha, Mary His mother); those of "bad repute" (the Samaritan woman, Mary of Magdala, publicans, wine-bibbers); Black people (Simon of Cyrene); workers (Luke 4:30-32) and other victims of the world empire (Matt. 21:31). He was of the people, knew their problems and spoke their language (John 10:14-16). The oppressed heard Him gladly (Mark 12:37). They thronged about Him as He entered Jerusalem (Matt. 21:9-15) where He led the freedom march to the temple, overthrew the money-changers (Matt. 21:12) and boldly condemned all who oppress the people (Matt. 23) or who compromise with oppressive practices (Luke 22:25-26). He gave us the New Commandment—to love one another (John 15:12, 17) as the creative principle of non-violent revolution, thus marking Him out as fulfilling the highest expectation of all religion and as illustrating the true and ultimate character of Humanity (Eph. 4:13).

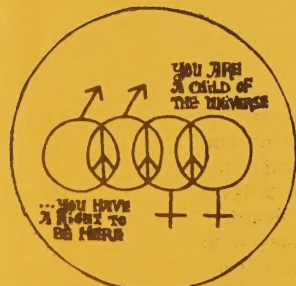
Seeing that the world was following Jesus (John 12:19), the politicians planned to mob Him (Matt. 26:3-5). They were afraid to arrest Him on trumped-up charges lest there be an uprising of the People (Mark 14:1-2); so the syndicate put out a contract on Him to a double-agent, a collaboratorist, to deliver Him into their hands (Luke 22:3-6). Seized in the dead of night while the people were asleep (John 18:3), given a mock trial (Matt. 26:59-66) before daybreak, they demanded His death. He was killed on the Cross of an enemy of the State (Luke 23:44) as the Organizer of the people's Movement for liberation (Luke 23:5), crucified by the State (John 18:31) at the request of the institutional church of his time (Mark 15:1).

Jesus was executed as a political conspirator, a revolutionary, in an early conspiracy trial. By His lifestyle and by the deed of Golgotha, Jesus has imbedded Himself deep in the fabric of the Earth, and by the Resurrection Jesus broke with finality the bonds of darkness that we might come into the perfect Light. The Creative Spirit sent by Jesus is truly in the world, in the neighbor, in the whole creation—the heart of the struggle against war and division, violence and confusion, sexism, racism and imperialism; and for freedom, peace, clarity, spiritual unification and human dignity in a universal free Community of sister/brotherhood in the Creative Life.

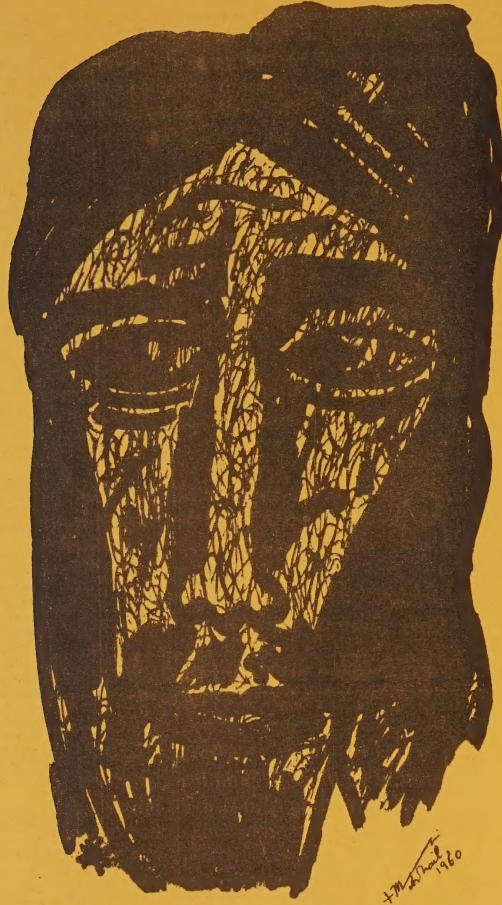


THE COMMUNITY OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST

An Ecumenical Religious Order of
The Syro-Chaldean [Aisor] Ecumenical Catholic Communion
also known as
The Evangelical-Eucharistic Catholic Observance
339 Lafayette Street
New York City, N.Y. 10012
(212) 228-9244



WANTED



:: JESUS CHRIST ::

WANTED: For Sedition, Criminal Anarchy, Nonregistration for the Draft, Crimes against Nature, Vagrancy and Conspiracy to Overthrow all Established Governments by Revolutionary Love.

Dresses poorly. Said to be a Carpenter by trade. Ill-nourished. Has visionary ideas of establishing a free and loving society. Associates with common working people, national and racial minorities, the unemployed, homosexuals and prostitutes. Is often to be found in the company of twelve other highly suspicious men, one of whom, John by name, he calls his Beloved. Alias: "Prince of Peace," "Son of Humanity," "Servant of the People." Bearded. Dark-skinned. Marks on hands and feet as the result of injuries inflicted by an angry mob led by bankers, generals, church officials, educators and other respectable citizens and legal authorities. Although he had been in the custody of the State's rulers of darkness in high places, and had been crucified as a political conspirator, and buried, **He Is Risen and in the Spirit lives amongst the people.**

To the institutional and establishment churches of our day, we are led by the Holy Spirit to issue this challenge: Why are you no longer guided by prophets, like the Church in Biblical days? Have you lost hope that the promise be true, "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy?"

The Christian community is intended to provide alternative vision and social leadership in the world. There is now a pressing need for a radically Biblical presence in the world. That is what we must be seeking to be!

To sum up this theme, then, of the need for radical Biblical renewal, and the restoration of the radical incarnational teaching of the Syro-Chaldean tradition, we would like to once more quote from Bishop Robinson: "Who is Christ for us today?" I have suggested elsewhere that the gospel passages with peculiarly compelling power for our generation are those, like the Sheep and the Goats just alluded to (Matt. 25:31-46), the walk to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) or the final appearance of Jesus by the lake-side (John 21:1-14), which 'tell of one who comes unknown and uninvited into the human situation, disclosing himself as the gracious neighbour before he can be recognized as Master and Lord.'....

"The Christological mystery is centered upon what Blake called 'the human form divine'. And the Christian is distinguished by the divinity he (sic) sees in man (which is very different from asserting the divinity of man)—the distinctive divinity that wears a human face, with a visage more marred than that of any man. Christology has to start with the flesh of God now, with his prosōpon in the present tense. For that is the Christ incarnate today. The clue to this is indeed the Christ who has been and the Christ who will be. For the Christian believes that the present can be understood—and changed—only by radical openness both to the past and to the future....

"We do Christology not as we are always talking about Jesus or bringing him in (Matt. 7:21-23), but as we truly respect 'the form of Christ in the world.' For 'the human form divine' is the face of 'the family of (hu)man(ity)'. (Robinson, The Human Face of God, op. cit; my parenthetic additions to break through the implicit sexism, +MFI).

Therefore, rather than concern ourselves with fruitless theological speculation, and certainly to avoid the various traps of the Magisterial Reformation and its docetic and erastian tendencies which some of those in the Communion would draw us into (whether those be of the establishment Anglican or Reformed/Calvinist stripe); we strongly suggest to all who would truly be Evangelical Catholic within the tradition of Mar Jacobus of blessed memory, that we formally reaffirm our adherence to the Confessional Statement adopted in 1903 by the Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholic Communion and issued by the authority of Mar Jacobus. This Confessional Statement, which follows, admirably sums up the Faith of Evangelical Catholicism as apostolic, primitive, Nestorian and radical reformation. It might be useful, however, to appoint a committee to work on a revision of the Confessional Statement in one area only: to eliminate all sexist and gender-identified language therein, and make it thereby more universally applicable to all Christians of the apostolic Faith.

Upon this Confessional base, we can then do our theological work in a Biblically sound way.

The Confessional Statement follows::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::

THE SYRO-CHALDEAN (AISOR)
CONFESSIONAL STATEMENT

being

The Faith of

The Holy Catholic Church of the East & the Apostles
restored in

The Metropolitan Diocese of
India, Ceylon, Milapur, Socotra, Messina,
and the English Missions
known as

THE EVANGELICAL CATHOLIC COMMUNION

in December 1903

and published that year

by the approval of the Metropolitan,
Mar Jacobus

Do not, like Judas, sell your Lord, your faithfulness to our holy religion, which your hearts tell you is best, for any selfish gain or ease. Be true Christians: bear the Cross, if need be: cling to the best you know: never despair, for God is with us. Yes! God is with us, then who shall be against us? Let all power and wealth and numbers in the world rise up against us, we will not fear! God, with a handful of people, if they be true and faithful, can win the world for the true religion of His Son!

Though there are many other things that it is good and pious to believe, we will now set forth the chief articles of the Faith which we desire to be taught in all our Churches with special care.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One" (St. Mark XII.21), we therefore believe in one only living and true God, the Infinite, Eternal, and Invisible Father, dwelling, manifest and adorable, in the one Lord Jesus Christ by His Holy Spirit. St. Paul, also, says, "To us there is one God, the Father" (I Cor. VIII.6) and "there is one God, one Mediator also between God and humanity, Himself human, Christ Jesus" (I Tim. II.5), in Whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. II.9). He is the onlybegotten Son of God, the Firstborn among many brothers and sisters (Rom. VIII.29); and as all people came forth from the Essence of the Eternal God, for as St. Paul says, "we are also His offspring" (Acts XVII.28), so our Lord Jesus Christ came forth, but in a unique manner, free from sin, full of Divinity, having the Spirit without measure (St. John III.34), the Word made flesh; as human, God manifest in the flesh, God incarnate. This same Lord Jesus was born of Maryam the Virgin, the "Mother of Christ." He worked miracles, was crucified for our salvation of His own Will, thus obtaining for us the possibility of forgiveness of our sins, in a manner above our comprehension; He rose again on the third day by the power of God. He made His living Presence known to His disciples by appearing to them, thus assuring us of His and our continued life after death. After our Lord's glorious Resurrection, His blessed Body became purely spiritual, and in the presence of His disciples He ascended to God, "His Father and our Father, His God and our God," (St. John XX.17), and evermore as the lifegiving Spirit (I Cor. XV.45) liveth to make intercession for us (Rom. VIII.34) and though with

the Father in heaven He is with us always, even unto the end of the world (St. Matt. XXVII.20).

After His ascension into heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit from God, that is, God's holy Presence and Power in the heart of people, upon the Apostles, and that same Holy Spirit is still given to Christ's people. Thus was the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, Evangelical and Catholic, established upon earth, and by our Blessed Lord were precious gifts given unto humanity, the three orders of the sacred ministry, Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons, the Seven Sacraments, and all the holy and precious means of Grace, which we hold so dear, to help us on our way to heaven.

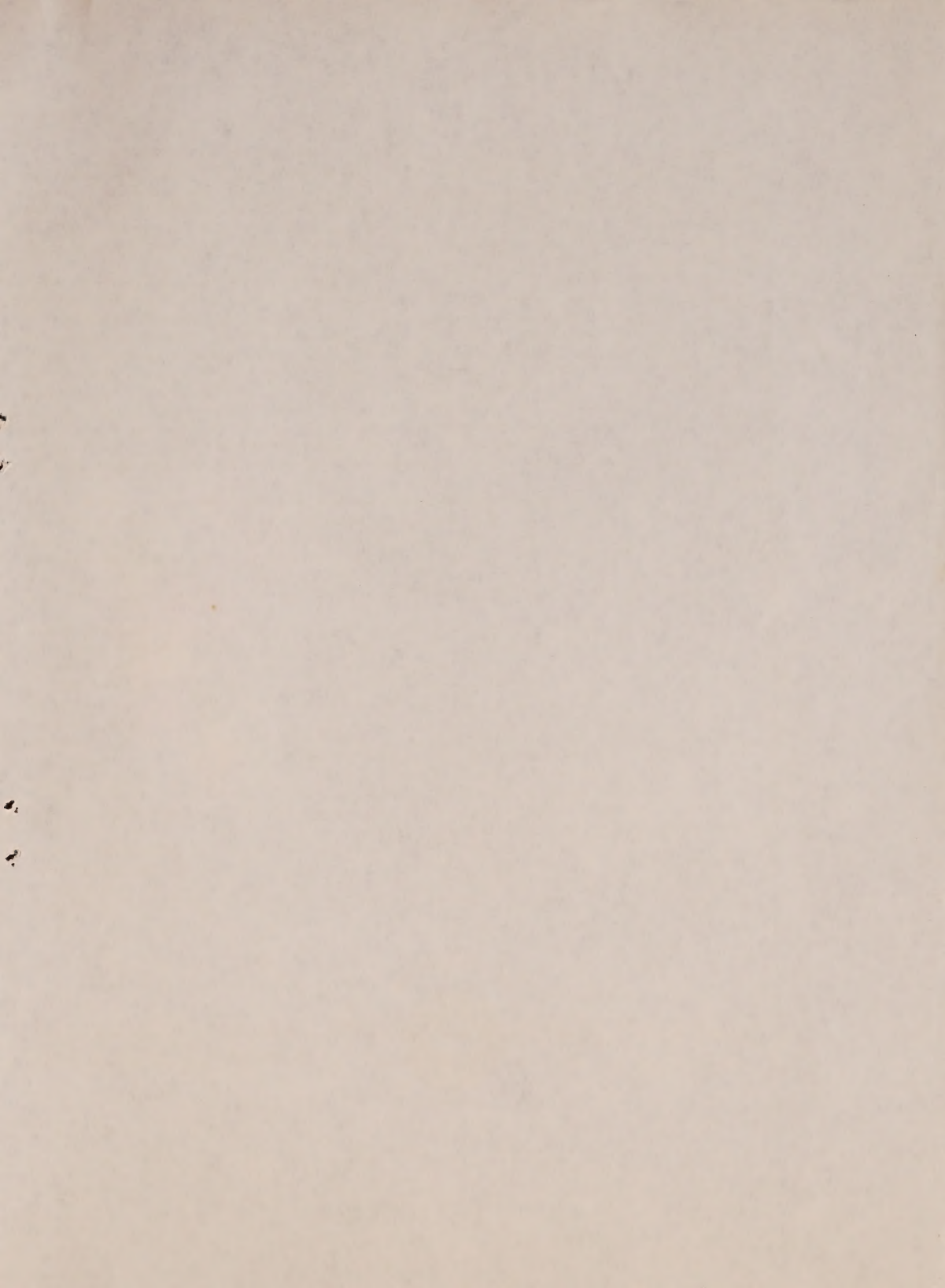
Among these Seven Sacraments holy Baptism and the blessed Eucharist, the Sacrament of the Altar, stand out as the two great Sacraments. By the first we are made members of Christ's mystical body, the Church; by the second we are fed by our Good Shepherd with the Divine Life in Himself from God. Holy Communion is the nourishment of the life of real practical holiness to the Christian, the incentive to renewed effort and more earnest striving after real goodness of life and noble unselfish conduct. We take into ourselves the Spirit of our Crucified Lord, making us ready to die rather than prove unfaithful to the highest conduct we know. In the Holy Eucharist we have also the real, essential, spiritual Presence of God in Christ and in the Holy Sacrifice we must take care that our worship is quiet, reverent and spiritual, free from all gross and material ideas. We worship God in Christ, not bread and wine; as we should have looked up to the soul and spirit of our Blessed Lord if we had walked with Him in Palestine, not to the bodily matter which clothed His Spirit. "God is Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (St. John IV.24).

So with pictures and images of the Saints let us always remember that though they should be treated with great respect (and should be more carefully and artistically made than is usual) they must not be treated as objects of worship. Their use is to remind us of the virtues of the Saints and to stir us up to greater self-sacrifice, holiness and devotion, but not to be treated as the Heathen around you treat their idols. We strongly recommend that images of Saints should be removed from the altars of our Churches and placed at the sides of the Churches. It would be well if no figure but that of our Saviour be placed on any altar.

Let us remember that we must stand before the just and merciful judgment-seat of Christ Who cometh now and at the last, judging all thoughts, words and deeds. Christ is our Judge, not the blind judgment of our neighbours; so let us be true to Him whatever people say of us. That is the spirit of the primitive Catholic Church: that is the spirit of the Saints and Martyrs of Jesus. If we have not this spirit already we must repent and be born again of the Spirit by a true conversion of heart. "Except ye be converted (or turn) and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (St. Matt. XVIII.3). In the life to come we shall be rewarded or punished according as we have been in ourselves and have done good or evil. Even punishment after death comes from the love of God to every soul, and it is remedial, not hopelessly unending and therefore useless; but it may be more terrible than has ever been pictured or imagined. What punishment, for instance, could be too terrible for a dishonest, impure, untruthful or self-seeking priest, thus betraying the high and holy trust, the sacred care of immortal souls, and the things of God committed to the priestly charge?

This, then, is an outline of our most holy Faith, the Faith of our ancient Syro-Chaldean Church of the East, called Nestorian, the Faith of the Gospel, the Faith of the Church of the Apostles. May Almighty God keep us true to it and enable us to show forth its light in the holiness of our lives. "I by my works will shew thee my faith," says St. James, the Lord's Brother (St. James II.18). So let us do, beloved in the Lord.





To Marge
With love and prayers that we may
receive Christ's strength for struggle

+ M. M. M. M. M.
Pentecost 1916



THE WAY OF DISCIPLESHIP



THE RULE

of

The Community of the Love of Christ



THE WAY OF DISCIPLESHIP



THE RULE

of

The Community of the Love of Christ

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ed by an affluent society; with women and gay people (male and female) oppressed by the bureaucratic structures and ideology of a sexist society; with black and third world people oppressed by the institutions and ideology of a racist society; with war-resisters and peacemakers who rightly feel that the institutional mainstream churches have betrayed the Gospel of liberation: and know in your gut the alienation of a world-wide cross-section of the people.

It is precisely in this time and place that we are called by the Holy Spirit to participate in the radical life-style of love and service to the people taught by Jesus. Christians are called to be a people who will throw themselves into the breach between the peace and healing of God and the loneliness, anguish and terror of the world's lost. We are called to stand as a bridge between humanity and God; willing, even eager, to become ground grain, broken bread, crushed grapes, poured out wine to be fed upon by the earth's hungry until those hungry ones can feed directly upon Christ.

Has not God's liberated community of Love in Christ been promised to the poor and lowly? Was not the liberator of the world a Carpenter and a Convict, Who died the ignominious death of a Political Criminal: but rose again in glory for our sake?

We come together to follow the risen and living Christ, "the same yesterday, today and forever" (Heb. 13:9). We follow in the Way of Christ Jesus, Who is not a temple dweller nor imprisoned in cloistered sanctuaries, but the One Who has broken all bonds and is at work in all creation and alive in all persons. Our spiritual Work is in the midst of the world.

In the Little Flowers of Saint Francis, it is recorded of the Poor One of Assisi's first audience with the Bishop of Rome: "Francis came armed with a parable. 'There was,' he said, 'a rich and mighty king who took to wife a poor but very beautiful woman, who lived in a desert, in whom he greatly delighted and by whom he had children who bore his image. When her sons had grown their mother said to them, 'My sons, be not ashamed; you are the children of a king.' And she sent them to court, having supplied them with all necessities. When they came to the king, he admired their beauty; and seeing in them some resemblance to himself, asked them, 'Whose sons are you?' And when they replied that they were the poor sons of a poor woman dwelling in the desert, the king, filled with much joy, said, 'Fear not, you are my children; and if I nourish strangers at my table, how much more you, who are my own children.'"

By this, Saint Francis spoke of the restoration of the Teaching and Way of Living of Christ Jesus and the apostolic and primitive Church Catholic. Even so today!

The trumpet sound of Love is blasting against the church walls: to break down those walls and reveal whether any of the Love of God, the Kingdom of God, the Community of Love, is behind those walls. The Call of the Spirit to us today is to become an ecumenical and non-denominational alternative to the mainstream institutional churches—to seek to bring, in our day, the Good News of Christ's liberation to all people.

In order to fulfill this mandate of the Will of God in the Spirit of Christ, the Church must return to its biblical roots and once again become an alternative community of the pilgrim people of God, sojourners in the world—not seeking for acceptance by

mainstream christendom, nor seeking merely to fill its own cash boxes: but becoming a servant community and a prophetic witness that confronts all oppression, greed and violence, speaking Truth to power, confronting "the powers of wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12).

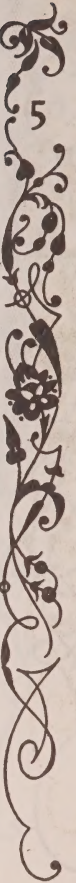
While more often than not the mainstream institutional church sells out its Pearl of Great Price, the Gospel of Liberation taught by Jesus, to property, status and social position: an alternative community in Jesus' Way of Discipleship has in it the possibility of serving the people as steward of that Pearl. While the mainstream church often silences its witness rather than lose its position and wealth: such an alternative community has the possibility of true witness in transforming love and service precisely because it has no wealth and no position. While the institutional church trades in the offensive Jesus for a more comfortable model: such an alternative community has the possibility of being the Body of Christ which was taught by Jesus, Who was the Friend of the outcast and the oppressed, the Enemy of all oppression. While the mainstream institutional church makes of the scandal of the cross an idol to be worshipped from a comfortable pew (and so denies the power of the Resurrection): such an alternative community has in it the possibility of being disciples of Jesus and proclaiming the Gospel—which is an outrageous shout of Love that smashes all idols down, purges the temple of moneychangers and rends the veil of the sanctuary.

The focus of The Community of the Love of Christ must be upon those who are poor, who are oppressed. Christ Jesus is the great Liberator: Who died for us, and rose again, conquering death, that we might live.

Jesus calls all! Jesus calls the oppressed to liberation in the new life; the oppressor to give up the role of oppressor—"sell all you have and give it to the poor" (Luke 18:22)—and in this giving up the oppressor's role, to identify with the people by service. It is in our helping others that we help ourselves the most!

With historic roots in, and episcopate derived from, The Holy Catholic Church of the East and the Apostles through the Metropolitan Province of India, Ceylon, Milapur, Socotra, Messina and the English Missions of The Syro-Chaldean (Aisor) Evangelical Catholic Communion (also known as The Evangelical-Eucharistic Catholic Observance), we come together to restore the apostolic revolution of transforming and liberating Love meaningfully for contemporary humanity; to do the Work of the renewed Christ-Teaching in our age for the spiritual renewal, consecration and transformation of humanity and the world; to fulfill the need of our age for radical Christian discipleship—"Yes, a Christian revolutionary! And not a revolutionary who happens to be a Christian or in spite of being a Christian, but revolutionary because Christian!" (Eric Gill).

We, therefore, strive to become revolutionary Christians, a community of people united in love and dedicated to creating a new world by the grace of God in Christ—a society based on trust, cooperation and sharing. We believe the essential message of the apostolic and undivided Church of Christ to be that people take priority over things or profits, that Jesus' teach-



ings take on meaning only in concrete actions that meet people's material and spiritual needs, and that the church as a community must work on all levels to meet those needs. In the end, God is not for organisations. God is for people! The organisation—the church—is only to bring the Love of God to the people. As Tullio Vinay said, at a Waldensian retreat, "The Church's task is not to save itself—Jesus has already done that. It is rather to give itself in love and service—in fact, to die for the world."

The voice of God in the Spirit of Christ calls to us today—"I am asking for bread: will you continue to give My people stones?"

The world-crisis today demands that the Cross be raised again at the centre of the people's struggle for a liberated and transformed world for all—gay and non-gay; women and men; black, third world and white—and not merely on the steeple of the church. Jesus was not crucified in an elaborate church-building between two candles: but on a Cross between two thieves or political prisoners (crucifixion having been reserved for political "enemies of the state", often called "thieves" by those whose class-privilege they threaten); at the town garbage-heap; at a cross-roads so cosmopolitan that they had to write Jesus' title in three languages; at the kind of place where cynics talk smut and thieves curse and soldiers gamble. That is where Jesus died, and that is what Jesus died about: and that is where the Community of Jesus must be and what the Community of Jesus must be about—the bringing into being a liberated and transformed world, the Kingdom of God on earth, a liberated community of sister/brotherhood in the Love of Christ!

Believing that we must be a part of all struggles for human liberation—Good News to the poor, release to the captives, sight to the blind, liberty to the oppressed—and hoping to help one another grow and find the life abundant, The Community of the Love of Christ welcomes as members all people who share our goals and beliefs and who are willing to take responsibility for making them a reality in the life of the Church Universal.



Feast of Jesus the Rebel,
May Day 1963

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revised:
Feast of Jesus the Rebel,
May Day 1976

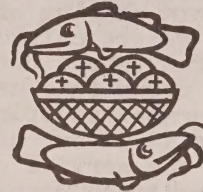
THE WAY OF DISCIPLESHIP

being

THE RULE OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST

for use by the Resident Companions, Oblate Companions, and Novices of The Community of the Love of Christ: as adopted in 1963 (being based upon an earlier rule of 1898) and revised in 1976.

In the Name of God our Heavenly Parent,
and of the Incarnate Word,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.



P R E A M B L E

Brothers and Sisters, if we submit to a common Rule, we can do so only for the sake of Jesus Christ and the Good News. We would narrow our understanding of the Gospel if, for fear of losing our life, we were to spare ourselves.

There are two ways: the way of the world, and the Way of the Spirit. And there is a great difference between the two ways. One is a way of death, and the other is the Way of Life. The way of the world surrounds us with false values, hatreds, a quest for riches and power: oppression, violence and the brokenness of sin abound. The Way of the Spirit is a radical following of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Brother, our Liberator and our King—and of Christ's commands given in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5-7).

Henceforth, though we live in the world, our worship and our service take place in a Community of companions within the universal Body of Christ. Common impulse stimulates the inward discipline which is so essential to our life. Only thus, in Community, can we hope to see our own selves open outward in fullness of the Life of Christ.

The pattern of perfect submission to the Will of God in the Spirit of Holiness was shown forth by our Lady Mary, when she responded to the angelic announcement that she was to be the Bearer of Christ Jesus, the Incarnate Word of God. The Song which she sang prophesied the Liberation which God brings to the oppressed of the earth:

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Liberator: Who has regarded the low estate of God's servant; for, behold, from this time forth all generations shall call me blessed. For God Who is mighty has done great things to me; and Holy is God's Name. And God's mercy is upon those that love God from generation to generation. God has shown strength: God has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. God puts down the mighty from their seats, and exalts those of

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low degree. God fills the hungry with good things; and sends the rich away empty. God is the Help of the people forever." (Luke 1:46-54)

Assured of our Liberation by God in the Spirit of Christ, we must not impose disciplines for their own sake. Far from groaning under the burden of a Rule, we rejoice! for as we renounce all thought of looking back, and are borne forward together by the same Incarnate Word and Spirit, we are able every day anew to throw ourselves toward Christ in the service of the people.

The purpose of a common Rule is not to stifle individuality, but to free us from useless shackles so that we may better bear the responsibility of our commitment and make use of its boldness. The Way of Discipleship has no other aim than to make us more accessible to the life of grace and love.

To carry the burdens of others, to serve the people in the concrete sharing of the sufferings of Jesus: this is our discipline.

We are called to run towards the goal in the footprints of Jesus, Whose path is the Way of Light! For the brightness of Christ to enter into us, it is not enough to gaze on it as though we were disembodied spirits. The living Word of God was made flesh and dwells in our midst! Therefore, we must commit ourselves resolutely to the service of the people and so incarnate the Spirit of Love, submitting ourselves to that Creative Spirit of Holiness in mind, heart and feelings.

More than mere discontent with the world's way of alienation, violence and brokenness, the response of the disciples is an act of obedience as well as confession of faith in Jesus (Mark 2:14). The Companions of The Community of the Love of Christ do not love the world less, but Christ more. They have committed themselves to an exclusive attachment to the person of Christ Jesus, the grace of Whose Call bursts all the bonds of legalism.

We enter upon this Way of Discipleship because there is no refuge, finally, from ourselves. Until a person confronts him/herself in the mirror of the eyes and hearts of brothers and sisters, that person keeps running. Until one shares one's secret with them, one has no safety from it. One can neither know one's self, nor anyone else, but will remain solitary: repeating always the patterns of death. Where, but in our common ground in Christ Jesus can we find such a mirror?

Here, a person can at last appear clearly to him/herself, not as the giant of one's dreams, nor as the dwarf of one's fears, but as a whole person, part of the whole, yet individual—undivided—with a share in the purpose of the whole which is the Communion of Saints, the Mystical Body of Christ.

We are, therefore, gathered together in the faith and love of Christ endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: "For there is one Body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God the Parent of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in all. And unto every one is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ...for the edifying of the Body of Christ." (Ephesians chapter 4)

The Companions of The Community of the Love of Christ are come together for Jesus' sake, or to use the words of Saint Richard of Chichester, "Day by day, dear Lord, of Thee three things we pray: To see Thee more clearly, love Thee more dearly, follow Thee more nearly, day by day." They have become members of this Community for

the Gospel's sake, because they have each in his/her own way received a Call from God to respond more faithfully to the precept, "This is my commandment, that you should love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

The nature of The Community of the Love of Christ (as of several other contemporary Orders) is to be more open to experimentation than other religious communities, whose inspiration is in the primitive and middle ages of the Church: and, therefore, to widening the spiritual horizon. The Companions must seek to effect a peaceful and continuous revision of their method of life and work, trying to eliminate steadfastly all that is not essential and thus tending to encumber us.

The Community of the Love of Christ is the continuation (due to an inward reformation in 1963) of The Order of the Christian Faith, founded in Oxford, England at the Church of Divine Love in 1898 by Saint Jacobus (Ulric Vernon Herford, later Bishop Jacobus) and in 1903 brought by him, as an Ecumenical Religious Order, into The Syro-Chaldean (Aisor) Evangelical Catholic Communion (also known as The Evangelical-Eucharistic Catholic Observance), being the Metropolitan Province of India, Ceylon, Milapur, Socotra, Messina and the English Missions of The Holy Catholic Church of the East and the Apostles.

Religious Orders which have their origin in Christian antiquity and the middle ages, follow the Evangelical Counsels or Vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. The Community of the Love of Christ, being a modern religious Community based on commitment to Christ Jesus in our age, follows the Five Notes or Vows of UNIVERSAL CITIZENSHIP, NONVIOLENCE, POVERTY or Simplicity and Community of Life, CHASTITY OF HEART or Self-Sacrifice and Inward Purification, and OBEDIENCE. The Way of Discipleship or Rule, while containing original contributions to the disciplined life of an intentional community in submission to the Will of God in the Spirit of Christ, includes also features and adaptations of the Rule and Precepts of St. Antony Protomonachos, St. Basil the Great, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Benedict, St. Bernard, St. Jacobus Rule for The Order of the Christian Faith, as well as the contemporary Rules and/or Covenant-Statements of The Berkeley Free Church, Bruderhof, The Catholic Worker, The Community of the Ark, The Community of Taize, Little Brothers and Sisters of Jesus, The Order of Agape and Reconciliation, The Peace Church, Sojourners.

In an article entitled The Modern Value of Franciscanism, the Founder of our Community, Saint Jacobus, wrote: "Of what were Saint Francis and his spirit the fruits? Of the historic Christian and Catholic social organism and of the monastic life. He inaugurated the life of the friars as contrasted with that of the monks. Dip into the Rule of St. Benedict and taste its sweet reasonableness—Jacob's warning, not to overdrive his flocks, addressed to the abbot, etc. Discipline and obedience, the starting point—what the modern man and woman abhors, but the fruits of which we inherit—St. Francis took out of the cloister into the highways of humanity. There was always the background, taken for granted, of Eucharist and daily Divine Office. It was a great step forward on the slow evolution from external to internal discipline; the taking over of the individual, in much self-direction, of the disciplined losing of self for the Church, the Kingdom, the whole human race." (The Most Rev. Ulric Vernon Herford, Mar Jacobus: "The Modern Value of Franciscanism" in Reconciliation, November 1934, published by the British Fellowship of Reconciliation)

People have created a false world with words, which they use to cover up their sin. Better the language of deeds, of loving and serving those who have been crushed by the words of the world.

The Companions want to show that it is possible to attain full human and spiritual fulfillment, and even to give a light to the world—a light reflected in our lives from Jesus Christ Who is the Light of the world—through simplicity of means and way of living founded in agape and action, the love of Christ and the service of humanity. The Companions will always choose the way of serving the poor, the lonely, the outcast, the miserable, the "untouchables" of any caste-ridden society, and those too oppressed to even struggle against their oppression. The mission of the Companions is to prove to the unloved, the despised and rejected of the world that they are not abandoned, not finally left alone.

Hence the natural home of the Companions is in the midst of the strife, misfortune, crisis, and falling apart of things in the world. It is in failure, in trouble, in the general breaking up of classes, stations, usual conditions, "normal" routines that human hearts become open to the Light of God's mercy.

At the end of the article above-quoted, Saint Jacobus (canonized in the Syro-Chaldean Evangelical Catholic Communion on 4 Oct 1970, the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, and so sharing the Feast-day with him) added the following from Adolph Harnack: "Every community, however, stands in need of personalities living exclusively for its ends. The Church, for instance, needs volunteers who will abandon every other pursuit, renounce 'the world', and devote themselves entirely to the service of their neighbour." (Harnack: What Is Christianity?)

Affirming the communion of saints, as expressed in the Creeds, day after day we sing the ever-renewed compassion of the Lord of the Living, showing forth in our lives the grace and beauty of the Love Divine. We are called in the Spirit of Christ as a sign of joy and love amongst all people. We will therefore cast off all gloom and moroseness and, even though surrounded by doubts and difficulties, we shall delight in the community of God's Love; rejoicing in God's world, its beauty and its living creatures; calling nothing common or unclean.

We must love our neighbours, and by this love help them to recognise the absolute imperative of our vocation; to love the dispossessed and oppressed, all those who hunger and thirst after justice and righteousness. Jesus had special concern for them: and we must have no fear of being disturbed by them, for they are Christ's very own.

As we have adored Jesus Christ at the Sacrament of the Altar, submitting to the Will of God in the Spirit we must now go out and seek Christ in all creation.



THE ACTS OF COMMON LIFE

WORSHIP

1. The prayer of the faithful is in the communion of saints.
To make viable this communion throughout the ages we must become full co-inheritors in the Love expressed by Jesus, giving ourselves up to the service of humanity in intercessory prayer as well as in the liberation struggle in the world. Christ could do without our intercession and praise: yet it is the choice of God in Christ to require us as co-workers, to keep praying and never lose heart.
2. The Sacraments teach us to make every action in our lives holy in Christ, expressing love and joy. Let us be attentive to enter into the meaning of the liturgical action: to perceive, under signs accessible to our fleshly being, the invisible reality of Jesus' Community of Love. Let us also take care not to multiply these signs but to keep them simple. The praise of God expressed by the Spirit of Holiness in our liturgical worship is effective only insofar as it graces our daily lives in the joyful service of all the people.
3. In the regularity of worship, we participate in Jesus' Love.
The whole love of the Passion burns in every Eucharist: and since we have been given grace to bring about the universal Community of Truth, Light, Love and Liberation, even as the Apostle says, "I will show you my faith by my works" (James 2:18), let us surrender ourselves to the living Word and Spirit. Let Christ reach the deepest recesses of our being to transform our mind, heart and feelings.
4. "The Sacraments are the highest part of religion, the visible symbols of Divine Grace. In the Lord's Supper earthly lips are allowed to receive the embodiment of Divine Being, and partake of Heavenly Food in the form of earthly nourishment. Whether the Sacrament is taken with more or less acceptance of the mystery, or with more or less accomodation to the intelligible, it always remains a great Holy Act, representative in the world of fact of what humanity can neither attain to nor do without. But such a Sacrament should not stand alone; no Christian can partake of it with the true joy for which it is given, if the sacramental sense is not fostered within." (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe) Christ Jesus, the Word made flesh, comes wholly to us in the Sacrament. We, therefore, nourish ourselves with the Meal of Thanksgiving, not forgetting that it is offered for the whole people of God.

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5. The fulcrum of the community life of the Companions will be the Eucharist, the perfect gift and holy symbol of the Divine Agape. The Community of the Love of Christ members shall thus be united in a special bond of prayer for the most excellent gift of the Love of Christ, agape: and a daily effort to cultivate the spirit of Love, and to express the same in certain definite acts. In this Ground of Love God incarnates in the living Word: Christ Jesus amongst us! This creative life of Christ is made known sacramentally in the descent of the Spirit of Holiness in the eucharistic act of the consecration of life. Though we remain sojourners and a pilgrim people on earth, a people "called out" from amongst all peoples of the world to witness the Good News of the Kingdom of God in Christ (which is the true meaning of Ek-Klesia=Called Out, which we translate today as "Church"), we can take root and grow in the Spirit: not alone anymore, not alienated and broken, but reanimated—alive by the Deed of Calvary and the Life of the Risen Christ! We cannot outlove God. Love is the grain of the universe—and this is the Resurrection Body to which we are called, the Garment of the Feast we each must don.

6. The core of all our Work, the calm that provides us refuge at the centre of the cyclone of daily life and gives us strength for struggle (both inwardly, in personal transformation, and outwardly, in living the creative life), is the sacramental life of the Church. Therefore, Companions and Novices pledge themselves to take part in the celebration of the Eucharist daily, or as often as their duties permit (and at least weekly), and to devote a certain amount of time to silent prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament (for the Lord's Supper is a tool of renewal), or a space of time to a meditative prayer according to other modes of Christian spirituality.

7. Saint Edmund Rich wrote in The Mirror of Holy Church: "Every hour in which you have not thought of God has been an hour lost." Common prayer does not dispense us from private prayer and meditation. The one sustains the other. Let us take time each day to renew our individual intimacy with the Creative and Holy Spirit of God.

8. Companions and Novices pledge to devote a quarter of an hour each day to reading and meditating on the Holy Scriptures, following a lectionary and in accord with the Christian Year. With the exception of those days on which one is really prevented from doing so, a quarter of an hour devoted to the Word of God would hardly seem too much. We should approach this reading devotionally, seeking guidance of the Holy Spirit; with a patient mind, constantly renewed by faith, to discover our Lord's true countenance; and with a persevering determination to conform both our inward attitudes and our outward actions to the spirit of Christ's liberating Gospel.

9. Companions and Novices pledge themselves to private prayer for a set minimum of time daily, part of which should ordinarily be devoted to regular intercessions for others, especially for The Community of the Love of Christ and its Work, as well as other religious communities; for individuals within the Community so far as circumstances allow; and for openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

10. Companions and Novices should arrange for a short period of a one-day retreat about once a month, finding a suitable place, not too far from where they live. It is preferable not to remain at home. Our Lord went out alone into the desert.
11. All Companions and Novices are expected to devote several consecutive days each year for their 3-4 day Great Retreat. Attendance at the annual Great Retreat of all Companions is indispensable for keeping one's faith truly alive and for making one's charity more and more universal in a secularized and materialistic world. During retreat days, and the ensuing Great Chapter of all Companions, the shape of The Community of the Love of Christ comes out in its completeness. In principle, no one can be admitted to the full C.L.C. Companionate before having taken part in one of these Great Retreats (or, failing this, for valid reasons, in several shorter retreats). Then we can "return" to the Church in the world with renewed strength for struggle, sensitivity to human needs, and dedication to the Will of God in the Spirit of Christ.
12. We must come to know the Presence of God with each of us and with all people, even when we feel no tangible response.



 AGAPE AND ACTION

13. "Have that Way of Life among you which was also in Christ Jesus our Liberator: Who although in the form of God, did not set heart on that equality, but became self-emptyied, taking the form of a servant. And receiving the being of humankind, accepted humiliation, becoming obedient to death, and it the death of the cross. So that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow down of creatures above, on earth and below; and every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord and Liberator in the splendour of God our Parent." (Phil. 2:5-11)
14. "Christ is our peace," says the author of the Epistle to the Ephesians (2:14). Without Christ there is discord between God and humanity, and between person and person. Our Blessed Lord says, "By this shall all know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another" (John 13:35). Saint Francis of Assisi wrote in his Rule: "Love is thus the distinguishing feature of all true disciples of Christ. It must be especially outstanding in the lives of those who wish to consecrate themselves to Christ and to Christ's people." And the Rule of Taizé says that even a simple meal should be an agape in which our Love in the Spirit of God in Christ "is manifest in joyfulness and simplicity of heart. The occasional moments of silence at meal-time bring us refreshment when we are weary or communion in prayer for the companion who partakes of the same bread. Let the brother/sister whose task it is to wait on the table facilitate the peace of the meal by watchfulness."
15. We must become filled with the Spirit of Christ. We cannot first save ourselves and then go out and save our brothers and sisters. The process of becoming the new person within the family of humanity, of coming "to the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13), is the process of giving our lives for our

brothers and sisters. It is not by happenstance that for centuries a crucifix has been the symbol of our faith, for only as we participate in Jesus' Deed of Calvary do we come to the Resurrection of love and joy. People in need, people that we can stand with in the struggle for liberation, people that we can stand with in their falling and bondage, or as they lie upon their sick-beds, are all Christ come to see us. We are the Presence of Christ Jesus in the world when we come listening, figuring ways of help, being there, giving a place to stand, together being strength for the struggle, as Saint Teresa of Avila says:

"Christ has no body now on earth but yours; no hands but yours, no feet but yours: yours are the eyes through which Christ is to see while going about doing good, and yours are the hands with which Christ is to bless us now."

16. All Companions and Novices will desire to be conformed to the Image of Jesus, Whom they would serve by the three ways of Prayer, Study and Active Work for the Kingdom of God in the Spirit of Christ.

- a) Prayer has already been discussed under the section on Worship.
- b) Study—"And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

In these words, Holy Scripture sets before us the true object of our study: true Knowledge is the Knowledge of God in Christ. Companions will, therefore, give first place to the devotional study of the Scriptures: and to the pursuit of other Christian reading—among which, the following study for all Companions and Novices is included (and this list may be expanded by later additions:)

Arnold, Eberhard: THE EARLY CHRISTIANS AFTER THE DEATH OF THE APOSTLES
Berdyaev, Nicolai: CHRISTIAN EXISTENTIALISM

Berrigan, Daniel: THE MEANING OF THE CREATIVE ACT
JESUS

Bloom, Anthony: BEGINNING TO PRAY
COURAGE TO PRAY
GOD AND MAN

Boehme, Jacob: THE WAY TO CHRIST

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich: THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP
LETTERS AND PAPERS FROM PRISON
LIFE TOGETHER

Boston Industrial Mission and others: THE BOSTON AFFIRMATIONS

Brown, John Pairman: THE LIBERATED ZONE—A GUIDE TO CHRISTIAN
RESISTANCE

Carpenter, Edward: TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

A Carthusian (Anon.): THEY SPEAK BY SILENCES

Clement of Alexandria (Saint): THE PROTREPTIKOS (Selections in translation, with an essay by Merton)

Cousins, Ewert H. (Editor): PROCESS THEOLOGY

Del Vasto, Lanza: MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD
PRINCIPLES AND PRECEPTS OF THE RETURN TO THE OBVIOUS
WARRIORS OF PEACE

Dionysius (Saint): THE THEOLOGIA MYSTICA (translated with an introduction by Alan Watts)

Douglass, James W.: RESISTANCE AND CONTEMPLATION—THE WAY OF LIBERATION

Ellul, Jacques: PRESENCE OF THE KINGDOM
VIOLENCE—REFLECTIONS FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Francis (Saint): BROTHER FRANCIS (edited by Lawrence Cunningham)
LITTLE FLOWERS OF SAINT FRANCIS

Free Church of Berkeley: COLLECTIVE HANDBOOK

- Freemantle, Anne (Editor): THE DESERT FATHERS
 THE PROTESTANT MYSTICS
 Friends, Society of (London Yearly Meeting):
 CHRISTIAN FAITH AND PRACTICE
 TOWARD A QUAKER VIEW OF SEX
 Friere, Paulo: PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED
 Fullerson, Mary: BY A NEW AND LIVING WAY
 Gearhart, Sally & Johnson, William: LOVING WOMEN / LOVING MEN
 Ginder, Richard: BINDING WITH BRIARS
 Goodman, Paul: DRAWING THE LINE
 Guinan, Edward: PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE
 Happold, F.C. (Editor): MYSTICISM
 Heard, Gerald: THE CODE OF CHRIST
 THE CREED OF CHRIST
 A PREFACE TO PRAYER
 TEN QUESTIONS ON PRAYER
 TRAINING FOR THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT
 Hurley, Loyal F.: THE OUTCOME OF INFINITE GRACE
 Itkin, Mikhail F.: THE ANDROGYNOUS SPIRIT IN CHRISTIAN RENEWAL
 CHRISTIAN REVOLUTION
 THE RADICAL JESUS AND GAY LIBERATION
 THE SPIRIT OF PORT-ROYAL
 John of the Cross (Saint): COLLECTED WORKS
 John XXIII, Pope: JOURNAL OF A SOUL
 PACEM IN TERRIS
 Jones, Christopher W.: LISTEN PILGRIM
 LOOK AROUND, PILGRIM
 Jones, Rufus: SPIRITUAL REFORMERS IN THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH
 CENTURIES
 Jordan, Clarence: THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT
 Kelsey, Morton: HEALING
 MYTH, HISTORY AND FAITH
 Kirk, David (Editor): QUOTATIONS FROM CHAIRMAN JESUS
 Law, William: SELECTIONS ON THE INTERIOR LIFE
 Large, John Ellis: THE CHURCH AND HEALING
 Llewelyn, Robert: PRAYER AND CONTEMPLATION
 Martin, Ralph P.: WORSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH
 Merton, Thomas: CONTEMPLATION IN A WORLD OF ACTION
 THOMAS MERTON ON PEACE
 THOMAS MERTON READER
 Moltmann, Jurgen: THE CRUCIFIED GOD
 THE GOSPEL OF LIBERATION
 THEOLOGY OF HOPE
 Nicoll, Maurice: THE NEW MAN
 Neuhaus, Richard J. and Berger, Peter L. (Editors):
 AGAINST THE WORLD FOR THE WORLD—THE HARTFORD APPEAL AND THE
 FUTURE OF AMERICAN RELIGION
 Pacific Catholics—Catholic Pacifists Association (Canada):
 BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS
 Phillips, Dorothy Berkeley, et al (Editors): THE CHOICE IS ALWAYS OURS
 Pilgrim (Anonymous—Russian): THE WAY OF A PILGRIM
 Pittinger, Norman: MAKING SEXUALITY HUMAN
 A VISION AND A WAY
 THE WORD INCARNATE
 "IN CELEBRATION": 2 sermons included in this
 volume from the first Integrity Conference
 Richard, Paul: THE SCOURGE OF CHRIST



- Robinson, John A.T.: EXPLORATION INTO GOD
THE HUMAN FACE OF GOD
IN THE END GOD...
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford: LIBERATION THEOLOGY
THE RADICAL KINGDOM
- Shewring, Walter: RICH AND POOR IN CHRISTIAN TRADITION
- Taipa, Ralph J. (Editor): THE THEOLOGY OF CHRIST
- Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre: THE DIVINE MILIEU
THE HYMN OF THE UNIVERSE
- Teresa of Avila (Saint): COLLECTED WORKS
- Thurian, Max: LOVE AND TRUTH MEET
- Tillich, Paul: THE COURAGE TO BE
- Traherne, Thomas: CENTURIES
- Tull, George F.: VERNON HERFORD, APOSTLE OF UNITY
- Tyrrell, Bernard J.: CHRISTOTHERAPY—HEALING THROUGH ENLIGHTENMENT
- Ullmann, Richard K.: BETWEEN GOD AND HISTORY
- Underhill, Evelyn: ABBA
MYSTICISM
THE MYSTICS OF THE CHURCH
WORSHIP
- Wallis, Jim: AGENDA FOR BIBLICAL PEOPLE
- Watts, Alan: BEHOLD THE SPIRIT
MYTH AND RITUAL IN CHRISTIANITY
- Weltge, Ralph W. (Editor): THE SAME SEX
- Williams, George (Editor): SPIRITUAL AND ANABAPTIST WRITERS
- Wink, Walter: THE BIBLE IN TRANSFORMATION
- Women's Caucus—Graduate Theological Union (Berkeley):
WOMEN AND THE WORD—TOWARDS A WHOLE THEOLOGY
- Yoder, John Howard: THE ORIGINAL REVOLUTION
THE POLITICS OF JESUS

And the following suggested Journals and Publications:

THE CATHOLIC AGITATOR, THE CATHOLIC WORKER, THE ECUMENIST, RADICAL RELIGION, SOJOURNERS (formerly Post-American)

In addition to this specialised reading for Companions and Novices, all should recognise the Christian responsibility for pursuing other branches of study, both sacred and secular. While the requirement of a special field of study or research applies especially to Resident and Full-time Companions, the Oblate Companions are also encouraged to assume particular areas of study as a matter of spiritual discipline, thereby contributing to a better understanding of the application of the Good News to all questions that pertain to human liberation and the imitation of Christ.

c) Work—Christ the Liberator and Master of all took on the form of a Servant. Jesus came "not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Matthew 20:28). Companions and Novices will therefore endeavour to serve others by Active Work directed towards the aims of the Community. They will also, so far as time and circumstances allow, render active help to others doing similar Work. Novices may be assigned specific tasks set at the Chapter Houses and the Abbey. Their lives and those of other Companions will be marked throughout by a reflection of the One Who came among us as the Suffering Servant of all. Let the Holy Spirit take hold of our simplified lives. Let our daily life resonate the Gospel, without the obstacle of many filters. Let the Companions discover their new togetherness in a unanimity of pluralism, combining a fearless acceptance of their own age with "an earnest contenting for the faith

once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), and with all that is best in the past. The Community must provide a sanctuary for the simple and learned alike.

17. In all of our lives we must proclaim the fullness of the Good News and we must realize that this means renouncing all evil and adhering to all good. Our life-styles will be totally transformed in the following of Jesus our Brother, our Lord and our Liberator—and we willingly take up this cross as we follow on the Way:

We must each love our neighbour as ourself. We must grasp the hand of the poor, the needy, the stranger, the outcast, the despised and the rejected.

We must in all of our pursuits practice truth, humility, righteousness, justice and love; with none walking in the stubbornness of his/her own heart nor going astray after fallible human judgment.

We must reverence and respect all life, strive sincerely to remove all pride and hardness of heart, call no one "Master", and take no oaths even as we have been taught by Jesus, Who taught us that we are not to swear at all, but that our "Yes shall mean Yes," and our "No shall mean no" (Matthew 5:35-37; James 5:12).

We must establish in our society a solid base of Truth and Love, making common cause with all who participate in Jesus' revolution of reconciling and liberating Love even as we participate in a bond of unity indissoluble forever.

It is to these aims and goals that we live not only within our Community, but purposely live in the world and participate fully in it. We should affirm our solidarity with all others who struggle and work for the transformation of humanity and the world, for our Work is not ours alone, but is the Work of Christ: and we share this Work with all who struggle for liberation and peace, by whatsoever name they call themselves.

This is the Way of Common Life for all those who seek after the inward vision in the Spirit to the end that we may perform at all times the Word which has been made known to us in Christ. We must always accomodate abstract theory to concrete circumstances: for the Incarnation is not a truth of the future, but the future is the Truth of the Incarnation where, in the most unexpected ways, Christ waits for us round every corner, blooms for us in the heart of every blade of grass, shines forth for us in every distant star. Thus we are to listen ever for the Call of the Spirit, and in every thing we bless the Liberator—Parent, Word and Holy Spirit.



 HOLY SCRIPTURE IN THE COMMUNITY

18. "What we want to impress upon the Free Churches is that there is a 'Depositum' which we have loyally to hand on, which is not an open question, and we have this in the Christo-centric theology of the New Testament" (Saint Jacobus, Bishop Ulric Vernon Herford: 1903).

19. The Companions believe that the God of creation, redemption and sanctification has given revelation of God's own Nature and Will for humanity in the Bible: and supremely and finally in the Incarnate Word, Jesus our Brother and Liberator, the Christ

of God. God's purpose in this revelation is the liberation of all people. Although God's power is revealed throughout the creation, this knowledge cannot make liberation known and experienced to people, for it cannot make Christ known of and by itself. God became revealed in saving word and deed to Israel, as recorded in the Old Testament: God fulfilled this revelation in the word and deed of Christ Jesus as recorded in the New Testament.

The one sufficient revelation of God is Christ Jesus, the one true Word of God Whom we must hear and Whom we must trust and obey in life and in death, to Whom the Holy Spirit bears unique and authoritative witness through the Bible—which is, therefore, received and obeyed as the written word of God.

Jesus alone is the infallible and inerrant Word of God, to Whom the Holy Scriptures attest as a witness without parallel; and by which they become our only source and rule of doctrine, our primary source and rule of practice in the Way of Discipleship.

The Bible, therefore, is the word of God because in it alone we find the One Who is the Word of God made flesh. God's liberating Christ-Event is the touchstone of Scriptural authority.

20. Henceforth, it is from the Person and lifestyle of Jesus that humanity's true calling comes into our hearts. The Word which Jesus brings is Love: and this is the true faith implanted in our hearts. The Bible is the testimony of the confrontation of humanity with the Living Word, Christ Jesus, and is the witness to the life and teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus.

The undivided and universal Church of God has received the books of the Old and New Testaments as prophetic and apostolic testimony in which it hears the Word of Truth and by which, interpreted by the continuing witness of the Spirit of Holiness testifying to Christ in Community and in the indwelling Light, its faith, practice, teaching and discipline are nourished and regulated.

"The outward Word is what Christ commanded the apostles to preach when saying: 'Preach the gospel of all creatures...' (Mark 16:15). But a properly equipped preacher must have the true Word of God in the abyss (Abgrund) of his or her soul and overcome thru much tribulation. The eternal Word is not written either on paper or tables, is not spoken or preached either; only a person is assured of it by him/herself from God in the soul's abyss—and it is written in such an one's fleshly heart by the finger of God. This difference is suggested by St. John who writes (1 John 2:7): 'Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you have heard.' That shows that all that one reads in books, or hears, or sees in people or in creation is not the living Word of God but rather a letter of imitative sign or testimony of the inward and eternal or living Word" (Ulrich Stadler: 1537).

Thus, though the Companions consider the Bible to be the highest of human treasures and inspired of the Holy Spirit, we must not consider the written word to be so high as the Word of God which is living, powerful and eternal. It is the virtue of the Bible that it points us to Jesus Christ, that living Word, and it is the function of the Bible to lead us to that eternal Word which is the Truth, Light, Life and Liberation of all. It is impossible to more exalt the letter of the Bible than by proclaiming it a true, outward, verbal direction to the one only true indwelling Light of the Holy Spirit and Liberation brought by Jesus Christ, "the Light which enlightens every person born into the world" (John 1:9).



21. To understand the Bible rightly, a person must become the new person in the free grace of Christ Jesus: seeking the Will of God in the Spirit of Christ, and filled with that same Holy Spirit Who gave forth the Scriptures. When the Bible is thus read and studied under the inner guidance of the Holy Spirit and in the Community of those in Jesus' Love, then Christ will continue to speak through the Bible to a changing world and to every situation in which people find themselves.

When, however, the Bible is read just with the outward eye, denominations substitute their adaptation to the world's culture for the living Word: yet breaking through all of the rigid boundaries within which persons and organisations would try to confine the Holy Spirit, the Spirit still breaks forth through the Bible which, rather than a justification of the status quo, remains that of which it may be truly said, "The Bible is the textbook of revolution" (Horton Davies).



 THE JOYOUS NOTES
 or
 THE LIFE OF THE VOWS

UNIVERSAL CITIZENSHIP

22. Christ Jesus reigns forever in Love! In Christ alone our citizenship resides—and the New Covenant requires us to refuse to take part in the governing over, judging or arming against our brothers and sisters, for to do so is contrary to the Good News and to that freedom in which Christ has set us free (Galat. 5:1). Our solemn loyalty and duty is to the Community of Liberation—the Kingdom of God in the Spirit of Christ—and to all humanity as our fellow-citizens with the saints in the household of God.

23. We proclaim the complete equality of all men and women as children of the one God, our Heavenly Parent. Nationalism, racism and sexism in any form are blasphemy against God, Who created all humanity in the Divine image and Who offers redemption to all. Men and women must come to God freely: and it is not the function of any person or institution to force the faith on anyone. Oppression and persecution of, and discrimination against, any people is a serious sin in the eyes of God to Whom we are all equal and equally loved.

24. God is doing a new thing in a day of deepening crisis for the human race and for the earth. What God is doing lies beyond the power of any individual or group acting in history: for the Power beyond history is raising up new communities of the Spirit, a Movement for Agape and Action, a Movement for Reconciliation and Loving Service. As a Sign of faithfulness, God is making a Covenant

of Peace with those communities (Ezekiel 34:34), whereby the weapons of war are broken (Hosea 2:18), the straps of the yoke are cut (Isaiah 58:6) the reign of the people is established (Daniel 7:27) and the garden of this planet is restored (Isaiah 11:6).

In the Divine Love for humanity and the world, God through the Holy Spirit raises up a separate people in all countries—a pilgrim people called to "come out from among them and be separate" (2 Corin. 6:17), called to be disciples of Jesus, the Lord of the Living. To seek out these Children of Light and encourage them (regardless of denominational affiliations or lack thereof) to promote better understanding among humanity—that is to cooperate with the Heavenly Parent's plan for redeeming the world.

25. Since Jesus Christ is the full realization of humanity in God, all societies must have intuitions of Christ's excellence. Thus it is truly said, that the living Word has been revealed in teaching, type and symbol even from the foundation of the world. Those types and symbols which went before find their perfect fulfillment and consummation in the Person of Jesus, as the Church Catholic has always taught: "The true religion was known among the ancients and existed from the foundation of the world; until the coming of Christ in the flesh, from which time on the same true religion was called Christian" (St. Augustine of Hippo); "That which has been believed everywhere, always and by all: that is what is truly and properly Catholic" (St. Vincent of Lerins); "All that which is true, by whomsoever it has been spoken, is of the Holy Spirit" (St. Ambrose of Milan); "The Holy Spirit is the Author of all Truth" (John Wesley). The Companions of the Community are called to the restoration of this apostolic teaching of the universal meaning of the Christ-Event.

26. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin once wrote: "Whatever the country, the creed or social position of the person I approach, so long as the same joy and fire of expectancy glows in that person as it does in me, then a fundamental, final and total contact is immediately established." Also, "today as in the days of Galilee, what we most need if we are to recognize the convergence of the universe is not so much new facts...as a joyful new way of looking at, and handling facts. A new way of seeing, combined with a new way of acting: that is what we need."

27. The Companions do not consider ourselves citizens of any country. Citizenship in the governments of the world is limited and is merely a part of the broken world: but our citizenship is universal and eternal, in the New Jerusalem, and it is this which draws the world together through the Love of Christ.

NONVIOLENCE



28. Christ Jesus alone is our peace! As brothers and sisters of one family in the Love of Christ, members of the Mystical Body of Christ, and citizens of the universal Community of Liberation, we object to any recourse to force and violence as being both corrupt and corrupting. The revolution which must be pursued in our own lives and in society must be nonviolent!

29. Jesus clearly taught total nonviolence among people as being essential to the Way of Discipleship. Violence is blasphemy against God our Heavenly Parent, Who created humanity in the Divine

Image; it is blasphemy against Jesus Christ, Who offers atonement and liberation to all people; it is blasphemy against the Spirit of Holiness, for the bodies of all persons are the temple in which the Spirit dwells.

The saints of Christ do not go to war. We are called to be children of Light and Peace, brothers and sisters to Jesus our Liberator, who have broken our swords into ploughshares and our bayonets into pruning hooks, who have abandoned the demonic paths of darkness. We use no weapons save the liberating Word, Sacraments and Works of Love and the grace of nonviolence, love, hope and submission to the Will of God in the Spirit of Christ.

With Saint Maximilian and the early martyrs who refused to bear the sword or put a pinch of incense on Caesar's altar; and with Saints Martin of Tours and Francis of Assisi who, in the age of the sword, dared to break their own and who were never violent after they chose Christ's Way of Discipleship, we too, in The Community of the Love of Christ, must be filled to overflowing with love for all men and women, for all creatures of God, for nature made by God, and—always foremost—for God our Heavenly Parent, known to us in the life and Spirit of Jesus Christ.

30. Some years ago, when the Community held its public services of worship at the Living Theatre in New York City, Judith Malina and Julian Beck wrote in both an Order and a theatre brochure: "In the secret quarters, in the underground, in Greenwich Village, Saint Germain, among the campus students planning sit-ins and freedom rides, in the hidden quarters of Africa, wherever change is initiated, in the midst of changes, in the march to the sea, in the picket lines in front of embassies, the worth of the world is proclaimed. In the invisible lofts where the anarchists and pacifists defy money and the structures of society, where the lies are being examined and reversed, lies which are the allies of death, in these places is the poetry which is the language of God." (From a 1961 brochure of the Community)

We do not seek merely the elimination of war, although this is essential if humanity is to survive. We seek the elimination of fear/aggression conditionings; which is to say, egoising, violence, coercion, exploitation and injustice which inevitably lead to war. We seek a Way of Living (including both the manner of making a living and the using of income) which affirms the oneness of humanity and all life and contributes to bringing about the universal community of sister/brotherhood in the Creative Life—the Kingdom of God on earth.

We believe that nonviolence is at the heart of God's creation and that we, too, must deal nonviolently and lovingly with ourselves and other human beings, with all creatures, and with this good Earth which God gave us. As peace with Christ implies peace with our neighbour, we must practice the ministry of reconciliation wherever we are. We must forgive our companions until seventy times seven. We recognise the essential unity of humanity and have joined together to explore the power of Christian love and truth for resolving human conflict. Peace, which is the Will of God in Christ, is the fruit of a community that cherishes the full dignity and freedom of every human being everywhere. We will try to show reverence for life in all situations, God being our Helper.

31. The life of the Community is, of itself, a school of non-violence. The nonviolent community is, however, holding itself back if it pretends to base itself upon purely human affinities or likings, even if sustained by common aspiration. To become the instrument of nonviolence and unity, intelligence and affections must be constantly renewed and animated by Truth and Living Love in the Spirit of Christ.

This renewal demands from each, in some degree, detachment, renunciation and sacrifice of one's opinions and one's personal feelings. This is why the members of the nonviolent community must seek together every day the spiritual strength in which they may find comfort, surmount their oppositions and live a practical unity which reaches out to every person, even an adversary.

This is the role and the primary sense of a true Christianity, a religion practiced in spirit and in truth.

Thus The Community of the Love of Christ presents itself as the experience of a society where all aspects of personal and social life are organised following the principles and methods of nonviolence in Christ Jesus. Through this permanent action it constitutes a center of formation and teaching which radiates throughout the entire world through its many points of liason with the struggles of all peoples for liberation, peace and human dignity and integrity. In these relations with the outside, the struggle against injustice takes on a special importance. Every Companion must be ready on call at all times for the defense of justice with the nonviolent arms of love.

32. In the strength of Christ we must challenge the sources of violence, war, repression and persecution—both in our own alienated and divided condition and in the society in which we live. By the grace of God we shall overcome the evil!

The Prophet tells us: "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isaiah 26:19). In the process of awakening in Christ, we struggle to bring about a truly free, creative and cooperative society in accord with the Good News and with the practice of the Apostolic Church. Our task is to help hold back the forces of darkness and transmute them into Light. That is what the Apostle means (Ephesians 6:10-18).

POVERTY

Simplicity and Community of Life



33. The Companions of the Community are dedicated to the apostolate and service of the poor. We must strive always to imitate, as a sign and witness, Jesus of the Gospels, Who was anointed to announce the Good News to the poor; to proclaim liberty to the captives, new vision to the unseeing, freedom to those in bondage, liberation to the oppressed, and the time of the Lord's favour to all: Who by free choice had nowhere to rest; Who came to serve rather than to be served, taking the form of a Servant: and Who, being rich, became poor for our sake, that by Jesus' poverty we may be enriched. In order for such a sign and witness to be effective, it must be loving, humble and joyful.

The Church which Jesus Christ came to establish on earth is, 23
above all, a Community marked by simplicity and service. Our
availability to the grace of Christ and to minister the works of
love and liberation implies constant simplification of our exist-
ence. In Life Together, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote: "The community
of the Spirit is the fellowship of those who are called by Christ
....In the community of the Spirit the Word of God alone rules."

34. Simplicity is a way of openness and sharing with our compan-
ions on the Way of Christ. The awareness that we own nothing
but that all comes from God is total. It includes even the small-
est things. From this comes the boldness to use in the best way
possible all present day goods available: but if we store for the
morrow the bread that comes down from heaven, we risk overtaxing
ourselves and our companions alike—for our vocation is to live in
the Spirit lives patterned after the life-style of Jesus in the
present moment, evernow! To this end alone we seek detachment
from security and from any power in things.

35. "The essence of purgation," wrote Richard of St. Victor
(d. 1173), "is self-simplification."

Continuous and loving simplification of our lives, after the
loving example of our Liberator, will be the aim of every Compan-
ion. We must endeavour to flee the complications of institutional-
ism the the competition of the world for things and the worldly-
power inherent in them. We cast off useless burdens in order to
better bear for Christ a fresh attitude toward material things.
By making simplicity our constant companion, we desire that all
barriers set up by privilege based on wealth, nationality, race,
gender or affectional preference, be overcome by love.

Let us remember, in our search for simplicity, that Saint
Francis of Assisi said, "What is the use of renouncing the riches
of the earth, if you intend to keep those of self-love?" Poverty
has no virtue in itself. The Spirit of simplicity is to live in
the gladness of today.

Pope John XXIII of blessed memory wrote, "The more mature I
grow in years and experience the more I recognize that the surest
way to make myself holy...lies in the constant effort to reduce
everything: principles, aims, position, business, to the utmost
simplicity and tranquillity; I must always take care to strip my
vine of all useless foliage and spreading tendrils, and concentrate
on what is truth, justice, and charity, above all charity. Any
other way of behaviour is nothing but affectation and self-assertion;
it soon shows itself in its true colours and becomes a hindrance
and a mockery. Oh, the simplicity of the Gospel...and of the ex-
quisite passages in St. Gregory, in his Moralia; 'The simplicity
of the just person is derided'." (Journal of a Soul)

Simplicity is reverence for the integrity of God's creation;
the refusal to exploit or manipulate the natural world to one's
own end. It recognizes the beauty, the goodness, the sanctity of
things. It values them too highly to reject or despise them, for
it receives them as the works of God. Yet it seeks not to possess
them, but to use them for God's own glory, and for the welfare of
humanity and the universe itself.

36. The early disciples of Jesus lived in Community and shared
all things in common (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35). We, too, must
regard all that we possess as being not our own, but as a trust
from God whose stewards we are. As our Heavenly Parent freely gives

all the good things of the earth, it is blessed for us to share our life and all that we have received, knowing that God Who has supplied all will continue to supply.

37. The Way of Discipleship is life in the community of Christ, whether gathered in one place or scattered for ministry to the world. The Community of the Love of Christ, in standing for simplicity, is inspired by the faith of the first Christians, whose complete surrender to our Lord Jesus Christ offered to the world a new vision of a Divine society in which a fresh attitude was taken towards material things. This vision was renewed by Saint Francis of Assisi who, choosing the Lady Poverty for his bride, desired that all barriers set up by privilege based on wealth should be removed by love. The Companions, therefore, though some possess property and earn money in support of themselves and their dependents, must yet, by their readiness to live simply and to share with others, show themselves true followers of the Christ of Bethlehem.

38. Our Way of Discipleship in Christ Jesus calls us to use our abilities, our possessions and the fruits of technology as gifts entrusted to us by the Spirit for the advancement of the common welfare. That life-style underlies those forces in society that raise human hopes for better conditions.

Therefore, all Companions are bound to avoid luxury and waste, dress simply, and, regarding their possessions as a trust from God whose stewards they are, will limit their personal expenditure to what is proper to the health and true well-being of themselves and those dependent on them.

Simplicity and Community of Life—the goals toward which this vow aims—are in order to progress in Active Love in Christ Jesus.

CHASTITY OF HEART

Self-Sacrifice and Inward Purification



39. The life-styles of the Companions of The Community of the Love of Christ are varied—single and married, gay and het, men and women, lay-people and clergy-people—Nestorians and Byzantine Orthodox, Roman Catholics and Anglicans, Protestants and Charismatics. Yet with this diversity, we seek always to serve—to be rooted in Jesus Christ—to pray, to study and to work effectively, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for God's Kingdom in Christ.

Chastity of the heart brings greater availability to concern oneself with the things of the Spirit. Self-sacrifice means neither breaking with human affections nor indifference, but calls for purification within one's state of life and for the transformation of our lives by active love responding to the grace of God.

40. When selfishness is not surpassed by generosity, when we no longer use confession to defeat the need to assert ourselves: our discipline will be useless, merely an act and a burden, instead of a joy. Thus as we seek in our worship to receive the leading of the Spirit of Holiness, we are well advised to stop the distraction of imagination. We must yield mind, heart and feelings to the Spirit.

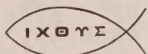
Under such voluntary surrender, we may experience that infilling with the Holy Spirit which does purify our passions and humbles our

human knowledge: the meaning of which is that we yield and surrender ourselves with complete sincerity to Jesus Christ in the Spirit of Holiness.

41. Prayer of Abandonment, adapted from Blessed Charles de Foucauld (Brother Charles of Jesus), founder of the Little Brothers and Little Sisters of Jesus: "Heavenly Parent, I abandon myself into Your hands; do with me what You will. Whatever You may do, I thank You: I am ready for all, I accept all. Let only Your Will be done in me, and in all Your creatures. I wish no more than this, O Lord. Into Your Hands I commend my soul; I offer it to You with all the love of my heart, for I love You, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into Your Hands without reserve—and with boundless confidence, for You are my Heavenly Parent. Amen."

42. Thought is a gift of the Spirit and an important instrument that serves to acquire what we need on earth. But thought alone is inadequate for the purpose of that inward work of grace by which we hear the Call of the Spirit of Holiness in our submission to the Word Incarnate. However, such submission must not be in word or thought only; but must penetrate into the innermost consciousness of mind, heart and feelings to such a degree that it is felt that faith and worship belong only to the Word Incarnate, even Christ our Lord Whom we know by the grace of the Creative Spirit of Holiness. Thus by grace we participate in the Deed of Calvary and the Resurrection!

43. Purification of the heart can be lived only in spontaneous and joyous forgetfulness of the egoistic self. This Work of the Spirit within us demands prayer and waiting, waiting and watching, prayer and work. There is no active love of one's neighbour without the cross. The cross alone makes known in the unsearchable depths of Love our inward transformation by grace: and grants us the strength for struggle and the further grace to live in and build the Community of New Life.



OBEDIENCE

44. Christ Jesus says, Follow me! and the only way we can follow is to be obedient to the cries of those whom Jesus loved. There is no hope of true service to persons in Christ without unity of mind.

Egoism disintegrates Community and halts its advance: but a true personalism, based on the Good News, achieves harmony in its very diversity, a solidarity and oneness guaranteed by the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Harmony in the Community cannot exist without a minimum of order and of responsibility for order. Each Companion must be responsible for his/her acts. We must be accessible to criticism and self-criticism as led by the Spirit: and we must each assume the co-responsibility for order within the Community.

45. According to the teaching of the Church Universal, absolute obedience is due only to God: whereas obedience to persons is limited by the bounds of authority and by the claims of conscience. Obedience is enjoined by Jesus (John 15:10), Who by perfect obedience (Phil. 2:8; Heb. 5:8) is its Supreme Example.

God's liberating power has broken into human history through the Christ-Event; the decisive victory over those principalities and powers that oppress human beings has been won in Jesus, and it is only a matter of time before those who hold tight the chains of enslavement realize that they have already lost the battle and must let go.

Because liberation through the Christ-Event has broken into human history, the Companions are called to no blind obedience; but rather to a radical obedience informed by the Holy Spirit through Scripture and conscience. Such obedience is due to the Rule—and, through the waiting in Community for the leading of the Holy Spirit to show us the Will of God in Christ for the Community, to the Community of the Rule as a whole. Only then may obedience be truly Christian—for such an informed and spiritual obedience never diminishes the personal responsibility of the one who obeys.

OBEDIENCE AND UNITY: The importance of obedience is the essential element of the unity which Jesus prayed for among disciples. This unity in Christ surpasses the simple fellowship that may exist among men and women united by the same goals, or even the same faith. In obedience to the Rule there is a force of unity among the Companions and union of the Will of Christ, an indispensable foundation of every religious community.

OBEDIENCE AND LOVE: The virtue of obedience, like all other virtues, is all the more perfect as it is more purely and more consciously accomplished in active love.

OBEDIENCE AND HEALING: "As by one person's disobedience all were made sinners, so by One Person's obedience all will be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). One result of our obedience, as participation in the ultimate obedience of Jesus Christ and participation in Christ's Work of redemption, is the healing of the wound of "original sin."

OBEDIENCE AND THE GOSPEL: The primary aim of the Companions is to make the Love of Christ known in our lives, and in our communities. This is the obedience which the Gospel lays upon us and which, shaping our lives and lifestyles, will reflect the obedience of those whom Jesus chose as disciples and sent forth as apostles. Like them in spirit, the Companions will, by word and example, bear witness to the Love of Christ in their own immediate environment. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to give us the strength to persevere in doing the Will of God revealed to us in Christ.

46. In order for obedience to be more perfect, in accord with the Will of God and the Spirit of Christ, it is necessary that the Abbot, the Priors and the Sub-Priors clearly know their own weaknesses and those of the Companions who work directly with them and within their jurisdiction. For we are called, for the sake of the brothers and sisters, and of humanity and the world, to give even our lives, for the sake of Christ and the Gospel.

That this Work of the Grace of Christ in our lives may proceed fruitfully, all Novices will present a weekly report to the Sub-Prior (or directly to the Prior or the Abbot) who is attending to their training. All Companions not resident at an Abbey or Priory shall present such a report monthly. All resident Companions shall present such a report once every three months: at deadlines set by every Sub-Prior, Prior or the Abbot for that particular House of the Community. Every Sub-Prior shall present a monthly report to his/her Prior; and every Prior shall present a report every three

months to the Abbot or Abbess.

47. As a sign of our obedience, when gathered together for worship and common meals, also when representing the Community at retreats and church gatherings and conventions or at meetings of groups working for liberation, peace and human dignity, Companions will wear the simple habit of the Community and the Cross of the Community; and, when the wearing of the simple habit is not possible, the Cross of the Community along with clerical shirt for those Companions in Holy Orders, or the clerical shirt with stripe down the front of the collar for those Companions not in Holy Orders, shall suffice.

During informal house-celebrations of the Agape and Eucharist, vestments for the most part are inappropriate. A simple stole may be used, however. For more formal celebrations of the Holy Eucharist, the Ministers of the Liturgy will wear the vestments of the Community: the habit, over which may be a white surplice or alb (with or without hood), and a coloured stole: along with the Cross of the Community.

If chausables are to be used, they shall be of contemporary design, reflecting the spirit of our Community.

While vestments may be used as an evangelical sign and to make the symbolic and dramatic aspect of the Living Acts of the Holy Table more meaningful, they may not be demanded: and it should be remembered that vestments, in the formal sense, were resisted, e.g., by the Church of the East and the Apostles in Persia and by the Bishop of Rome in the West as late as the 5th Century.

48. Wherever two or three are gathered together in the Name of Jesus and in Jesus' Way of revolutionary Love, the Presence of Christ with each person and with the gathered community through the Holy Spirit proclaims Jesus' victory over death. Jesus' Way of nonviolent and transforming Love is the necessary and sufficient condition that nothing in us that truly proclaims the Truth and Love of Christ can be touched by death.

Within this context, we believe that Jesus Christ our Lord and Liberator has given authority to the Church to exercise discipline: Matthew 18:15-20. The purpose of such discipline must be to enable each member to grow to full stature in Christ; to restore to full fellowship the members who fall into sin; to clarify for all members the meaning of Christian discipleship; to promote the integrity of the Church of God; to warn the weak of the serious character of sin and disobedience to God's Word; and to maintain the Church's witness before the world. In this Work the Church employs public teaching, private counseling, intercessory prayer, earnest warning and rebuke, and sympathetic encouragement: and, as in the Church at large, so also within the Community among the Companions. If the condition persists, the Church may withhold the right to the Sacraments until the individual repents.

The standard in Christian discipline is the Word of God as revealed in Holy Scripture and interpreted by the Holy Spirit in Community: and in the Community of Companions, the standard also includes The Covenant Way of Discipleship or Rule of The Community of the Love of Christ. The entire Community should share in the work of discipline and seek earnestly to win the fallen member.

As George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, put it (1669): "And all such as behold their brother or sister in a transgression,

go not in a rough, light or upbraiding spirit to reprove or admonish him or her, but in the power of the Lord, and spirit of the Lamb, and in the wisdom and love of the Truth, which suffers thereby, to admonish such an offender. So may the soul of such a brother or sister be seasonably and effectually reached unto and overcome, and they may have cause to bless the name of the Lord on their behalf, and so blessing may be rewarded into the bosom of that faithful and tender brother or sister that so admonished them."

CONCLUSION

49. There is a danger in having indicated in this Rule only the minimum necessary for the common life. It is better to run this risk and not to confine the Companions in complacency and routine.

If this Covenant Way of Discipleship were ever to be regarded as an end in itself and to exempt us from ever more seeking to discover God's Will, the Love of Christ, and the Light of the Holy Spirit, we would be imposing on ourselves a useless burden; it would be better never to have written it.

It is not the wisdom of the wise that confounds the world, but the wisdom of the foolish, as when the Apostle says, "we are fools for Christ" (1 Cor. 4:10). New Life is brought into the world by those who are called fools by the dying and the safe. It is in the darkness of not seeing why we must always say "Yes" to life in Christ, yet obediently saying "Yes!" that all that is "No" in the world's way vanishes in the Truth of New Light, Love and Liberation which is Christ our Lord:

"...Neither is it a matter of reporting that it is 'here' or 'there.' For behold! the reign of God is already in your midst."
(Luke 17:21)



THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM-ISAIAHII: 6-8

 EXHORTATION READ AT THE PROFESSION

My Companion(s), you who commit yourself (yourselves) to God's mercy and love, remember that Jesus Christ our Brother, our Lord and our Liberator comes to strengthen your faith and that, covenanting with you, Christ fulfills for you the Promise: "Truly there is no one who has given up home, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or husband, or children, or land, for my sake and for the Gospel, who will not receive in this age a hundred times as much: houses, and brothers, and sisters, and fathers, and mothers, and lovers, and children, and land—and persecutions besides—and in the age to come eternal life in the liberated Community of Love, the Kingdom of God."

This is a Way opposed to human reason: and like the prophets and the apostles, the disciples and the martyrs, and all our forerunners in the Faith, you can indeed advance on this Way only by faith, not by sight—always assured that one who loses one's life for Christ's sake shall find it. Therefore, as the Scripture says, "Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust: for your dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

"In freedom Christ set us free. Therefore stand fast: and never submit again to the yoke of bondage!" Henceforth, walk in the steps of Jesus. Do not be anxious about tomorrow: "First seek God's Kingdom and God's justice." Surrender yourself, give yourself: and good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over will be poured into your lap—for the measure you give is the measure you will receive.

When you pray do not use vain repetitions. Do not display your righteousness before people to win their admiration. Do not let your inward discipline give you a sorrowful appearance like a hypocrite who puts on an unsightly face so that one might be seen of persons. Anoint your head, wash your face: so that only the One True God, the Merciful, the Compassionate—Parent, Word and Holy Spirit—Who is in the secret might know the intention of your heart.

Maintain yourself in simplicity, fellowship and joy: the joy of the merciful, the joy of the pure of heart, the joy of Love in Christ. Be vigilant! For our enemy the devil goes about seeking whom he may devour.

If you are to admonish a Companion or any other brother or sister, let it be between yourself and that person alone. Always seek community with your neighbour, known and unknown—the community of Love which is the Creative Life of Jesus Christ.

Remember! the service that you have chosen in Christ—or, rather, the service for which the Holy Spirit has chosen you—is a worthy one and you are charged to prepare yourself diligently for it, so that you may faithfully perform it. It is our Lord, our Brother and our Liberator Jesus Christ, Who in the Divine Love for you has chosen you to be a sign of the Love Divine within the Church Universal. Christ wills that you should receive the fulfillment of the Community of the Apostles through the Spirit.

Renouncing all thought of looking back,
 and joyful with infinite gratitude,
 never fear to precede the dawn:
 to praise, bless and sing
 Christ our Lord.

Amen.



THE VOWS OF RELIGIOUS PROFESSION

I have beheld a Spark of the Divine in Humanity. That Spark, the universal and indwelling Christ, must be nurtured, as the flickering ember is shielded from the driving rain: even at the cost of my life.

Here, in the presence of this congregation and at the Table of the Lord, I do promise that I will maintain, multiply and increase the Community of Faith, and that I will not betray the same to any power in the world, but will confront power always by speaking the Truth in Christ—for I believe in God our Heavenly Parent, Who made the sun and the moon, the heavens and the earth, cherubim and seraphim, and all that we see around us, as well as all that is unseen; and in Jesus Christ, the alone-born Incarnate Word of God, our Brother, our Lord and our Liberator, Who died, Who rose, Who comes again; and in the Holy Spirit, Who sanctifies all creation in the New Life in the Love of Christ.

I promise to dedicate myself to the apostolate and service of the people in the proclaiming of the Good News to all creation as the Call to make us free. I will strive always to imitate, as a sign and witness, Jesus of the Gospels, Who was anointed to announce the Good News to the poor; to proclaim liberty to the captives, new vision to the unseeing, freedom to those in bondage, liberation to the oppressed, and the time of the Lord's favor to all: Who by free choice had nowhere to rest; Who came to serve rather than to be served, taking the form of a Servant: and Who, being rich, became poor for my sake that by Jesus' poverty I may be enriched. I will bear in mind at all times that in order for such a sign and witness to be effective, it must be loving, humble and joyful.

Whatsoever things I see or hear concerning the life of persons, which ought not to be spoken abroad, I will keep silence upon: counting all such things as sacred under the seal of the confessional and of sanctuary in the Holy Spirit.

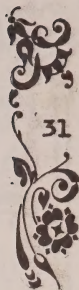
I believe fully that the Church which Jesus Christ came to establish upon Earth is, above all, a Community of Liberation through the Spirit. I dedicate myself to the restoration of this Church Universal in Christ's Work of reconciling and transforming Love in the Spirit of solidarity with my Companions.

Following the Life of Mary, the Bearer of Christ, the Apostle of the Lord as made clear in her statement of submission to the Will of God in the Magnificat, I will seek to bring every phase of my life under the Lordship of Christ alone. The Way of Living which I follow shall be for the benefit of my brothers and sisters, not of the Order and Community alone, but of all Humanity, both now and in generations yet unborn—and not for their hurt or any wrong.

I will live a life of **UNIVERSAL CITIZENSHIP** in the liberated Community of sister/brotherhood in the Love of Christ; of **NONVIOLENCE** and reverence for all life—that all creation may come to the realization of that transforming Truth, Light, Love and Liberation which is Christ our Lord; of **POVERTY**, which is to say, simplicity and community of life with my sisters and brothers; of **CHASTITY OF HEART**, which is to say, self-sacrifice and inward purification through the Holy Spirit; and of **OBEDIENCE** to the Rule of the Community—as these are understood

by our Covenant Way of Discipleship or Rule. Thus, by the grace and help of God, and in the strength for struggle given in Christ by the Holy Spirit, I take my place within this Order and Community of the Great Work for the transformation of Humanity and the World in the Love of Jesus Christ.

Amen.



WHICH SHALL WE PERFORM?

THE WORKS OF MERCY
FEED THE HUNGRY.
CLOTHE THE NAKED.
GIVE DRINK TO THE
THIRSTY. VISIT THE
IMPRISONED.
CARE FOR THE SICK.
BURY THE DEAD



THE WORKS OF WAR
DESTROY CROPS
AND LAND. SEIZE
FOOD SUPPLIES.
DESTROY HOMES
SCATTER FAMILIES
CONTAMINATE
WATER. IMPRISON
DISSENSERS. INFLECT
WOUNDS. BURNS.
KILL THE LIVING

Rita Corbin



The Community of the Love of Christ

339 Lafayette Street
New York City, N.Y. 10012

THE SYRO-CHALDEAN (AISOR)
CONFESSIONAL STATEMENT

being

The Faith of

The Holy Catholic Church of the East & the Apostles
restored in

The Metropolitan Diocese of

India, Ceylon, Milapur, Socotra, Messina,
and the English Missions

known as

THE EVANGELICAL CATHOLIC COMMUNION

in December 1903

and published that year

by the approval of the Metropolitan,

Mar Jacobus

Do not, like Judas, sell your Lord, your faithfulness to our holy religion, which your hearts tell you is best, for any selfish gain or ease. Be true Christians: bear the Cross, if need be: cling to the best you know: never despair, for God is with us. Yes! God is with us, then who shall be against us? Let all power and wealth and numbers in the world rise up against us, we will not fear! God, with a handful of people, if they be true and faithful, can win the world for the true religion of His Son!

Though there are many other things that it is good and pious to believe, we will now set forth the chief articles of the Faith which we desire to be taught in all our Churches with special care.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One" (St. Mark XII.21), we therefore believe in one only living and true God, the Infinite, Eternal, and Invisible Father, dwelling, manifest and adorable, in the one Lord Jesus Christ by His Holy Spirit. St. Paul, also, says, "To us there is one God, the Father" (I Cor. VIII.6) and "there is one God, one Mediator also between God and humanity, Himself human, Christ Jesus" (I Tim. II.5), in Whom "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. II.9). He is the onlybegotten Son of God, the Firstborn among many brothers and sisters (Rom. VIII.29); and as all people came forth from the Essence of the Eternal God, for as St. Paul says, "we are also His offspring" (Acts XVII.28), so our Lord Jesus Christ came forth, but in a unique manner, free from sin, full of Divinity, having the Spirit without measure (St. John III.34), the Word made flesh; as human, God manifest in the flesh, God incarnate. This same Lord Jesus was born of Maryam the Virgin, the "Mother of Christ." He worked miracles, was crucified for our salvation of His own Will, thus obtaining for us the possibility of forgiveness of our sins, in a manner above our comprehension; He rose again on the third day by the power of God. He made His living Presence known to His disciples by appearing to them, thus assuring us of His and our continued life after death. After our Lord's glorious Resurrection, His blessed Body became purely spiritual, and in the presence of His disciples He ascended to God, "His Father and our Father, His God and our God," (St. John XX.17), and evermore as the life-giving Spirit (I Cor. XV.45) liveth to make intercession for us (Rom. VIII.34) and though with

the Father in heaven He is with us always, even unto the end of the world (St. Matt. XXVII.20).

After His ascension into heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit from God, that is, God's holy Presence and Power in the heart of people, upon the Apostles, and that same Holy Spirit is still given to Christ's people. Thus was the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, Evangelical and Catholic, established upon earth, and by our Blessed Lord were precious gifts given unto humanity, the three orders of the sacred ministry, Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons, the Seven Sacraments, and all the holy and precious means of Grace, which we hold so dear, to help us on our way to heaven.

Among these Seven Sacraments holy Baptism and the blessed Eucharist, the Sacrament of the Altar, stand out as the two great Sacraments. By the first we are made members of Christ's mystical body, the Church; by the second we are fed by our Good Shepherd with the Divine Life in Himself from God. Holy Communion is the nourishment of the life of real practical holiness to the Christian, the incentive to renewed effort and more earnest striving after real goodness of life and noble unselfish conduct. We take into ourselves the Spirit of our Crucified Lord, making us ready to die rather than prove unfaithful to the highest conduct we know. In the Holy Eucharist we have also the real, essential, spiritual Presence of God in Christ and in the Holy Sacrifice we must take care that our worship is quiet, reverent and spiritual, free from all gross and material ideas. We worship God in Christ, not bread and wine; as we should have looked up to the soul and spirit of our Blessed Lord if we had walked with Him in Palestine, not to the bodily matter which clothed His Spirit. "God is Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (St. John IV.24).

So with pictures and images of the Saints let us always remember that though they should be treated with great respect (and should be more carefully and artistically made than is usual) they must not be treated as objects of worship. Their use is to remind us of the virtues of the Saints and to stir us up to greater self-sacrifice, holiness and devotion, but not to be treated as the Heathen around you treat their idols. We strongly recommend that images of Saints should be removed from the altars of our Churches and placed at the sides of the Churches. It would be well if no figure but that of our Saviour be placed on any altar.

Let us remember that we must stand before the just and merciful judgment-seat of Christ Who cometh now and at the last, judging all thoughts, words and deeds. Christ is our Judge, not the blind judgment of our neighbours; so let us be true to Him whatever people say of us. That is the spirit of the primitive Catholic Church: that is the spirit of the Saints and Martyrs of Jesus. If we have not this spirit already we must repent and be born again of the Spirit by a true conversion of heart. "Except ye be converted (or turn) and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven (St. Matt. XVIII.3). In the life to come we shall be rewarded or punished according as we have been in ourselves and have done good or evil. Even punishment after death comes from the love of God to every soul, and it is remedial, not hopelessly unending and therefore useless; but it may be more terrible than has ever been pictured or imagined. What punishment, for instance, could be too terrible for a dishonest, impure, untruthful or self-seeking priest, thus betraying the high and holy trust, the sacred care of immortal souls, and the things of God committed to the priestly charge?

This, then, is an outline of our most holy Faith, the Faith of our ancient Syro-Chaldean Church of the East, called Nestorian, the Faith of the Gospel, the Faith of the Church of the Apostles. May Almighty God keep us true to it and enable us to show forth its light in the holiness of our lives. "I by my works will shew thee my faith," says St. James, the Lord's Brother (St. James II.18). So let us do, beloved in the Lord.



WANTED



:: JESUS CHRIST ::

WANTED: For Sedition, Criminal Anarchy, Nonregistration for the Draft, Crimes against Nature, Vagrancy and Conspiracy to Overthrow all Established Governments by Revolutionary Love.

Dresses poorly. Said to be a Carpenter by trade. Ill-nourished. Has visionary ideas of establishing a free and loving society. Associates with common working people, national and racial minorities, the unemployed, homosexuals and prostitutes. Is often to be found in the company of twelve other highly suspicious men, one of whom, John by name, he calls his Beloved. Alias: "Prince of Peace," "Son of Humanity," "Servant of the People." Bearded. Dark-skinned. Marks on hands and feet as the result of injuries inflicted by an angry mob led by bankers, generals, church officials, educators and other respectable citizens and legal authorities. Although he had been in the custody of the State's rulers of darkness in high places, and had been crucified as a political conspirator, and buried, **He Is Risen and in the Spirit lives amongst the people.**

THE REBEL JESUS



The Way of Jesus is too severe for those who would compromise with the way of exploitation (Luke 14:27). That is the reason there is a religion about Jesus (Matt. 15:8). Jesus Himself said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6).

The Way of Jesus and the Prophets is a Way of, by and for the oppressed peoples of the world (Luke 6:20). That is why sexist and racist oppressors hate it (John 14:30) and the reason agents of oppression pay theologians to rip-off the Way and come up with a religion about Jesus and the Prophets and the next life (II Tim. 4:3). The prophetic faith has no good word to nor for oppressors and tyrants (Ex. 9:1). It condemns all oppressors (Isa. 3:15) and demands that the people be freed from bondage (Ex. 5:1) and have land and houses (Isa. 5:8), food, clothes and health (Matt. 25:31-46) and freedom (John 8:32) to usher in the new age, the reign of the people (Dan. 7:27).

We live today as in the time of Daniel, when the handwriting is on the wall. "You have praised the gods of silver and gold, of iron and bronze, of wood and stone, which neither see nor know, and you have not given glory to God, in whose charge is your very breath and in whose hands are all your ways. This is why that hand was sent from God's presence and why it wrote this inscription: *Mene, mene, tekel upharsin*. Here is the interpretation: *mene*—God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end; *tekel*—you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting; *upharsin*—your nation has been divided and given away from you" (Dan. 5:23-28). Babylon must fall!

Thousands of years before the People called the conflict between oppression and freedom by their rightful name—the fight between sexism, racism and imperialism on the one hand and peace, human dignity and freedom on the other—the prophets and Jesus were teaching that Babylon—the State—must fall (Isa. 9:6). They worked to turn this world system right side up (Luke 1:52); to correct the extremes of sexual, racial and class division (Gal. 3:28), of wealth and poverty, by making the first last and the last first (Matt. 19:30).

The Bible reveals that throughout history God has been with the people (Isa. 62:12), leading the struggle against tyranny (Isa. 61:1-11) and for freedom and righteousness (Isa. 65:21-25). In the fullness of time there were raised up many organizers of the people (Ex. 10-11) among the oppressed multitudes (Ex. 3:6-10). The history of the Jewish people made it possible for Jesus of Nazareth, our Brother, to become Liberator for all people (Matt. 9:36-38) and to start a Movement for a universal and free Community (Luke 14:15) on earth (Matt. 6:10) for all that labor and are heavy-laden and need rest (Matt. 11:28).

When Mary knew that she was to become the Mother of Jesus, she declared her solidarity with those of low-estate, the oppressed; and rejoiced that she was to have part in the divine liberation program for the people (Luke 1:46-54).

Jesus became aware of oppressive conditions early (Luke 2:40) and at the age of 12 confounded the theologians who had forgotten to apply their religion towards the liberation of the people—by His understanding of the issues at stake (Luke 2:41-47). After this, He worked with Joseph at the carpenter's bench until He was about 30 (Luke, chaps. 1-3). Jesus learned at first hand the problems of the people, becoming the Servant of the People (Phil. 2:7).

The historical age of Jesus witnessed violence against personal integrity and against social classes comparable to today's violence. In the absence of technology, the age of Jesus did not see a comparable violence against the ecology. But the symbolism of the end of the world which Jesus used as a basis for the ethic of His revolutionary Way shows His prophetic insight that comparable violence against nature was both possible and likely. To defeat this set-up He knew that all the oppressed people must be united as One (Matt. 5:5) into a world Community (Matt. 13:38) without regard to sex, race, tribe or tongue (Luke 13:29).

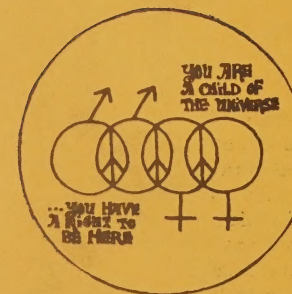
The Servant of the People was the open and up-front spokesperson for an international underground. He spoke in a symbolic language about the insurrection of the just, when the poor would rise from the tomb of slavery in world-wide non-violent revolution, throw off the yoke of the State and establish the reign of the People. In the Bible, just, poor and righteous are synonymous terms; also wicked, rich, unrighteous.

Jesus came to save the oppressed, to relate to those whom society has cast out and to be a model for their liberation. He did not say "Get on your knees and worship me"; He said "Follow me." He identified with the outcast and the oppressed, and said He came "to bring life more abundant" (John 10:10), "to bring the Good News to the poor; to proclaim liberty to the captives, new vision to the unseen, freedom to those in bondage, liberation to the oppressed, the Time of Liberation to All" (Luke 4:18). Above all, He held up self-giving Love in the service of the People as the commandment to both challenge and perfect all commandments.

Although Jesus, by His presence with the revolutionaries of His day, recognized the justice of their cause, every bit of His Teaching and Lifestyle consistently proclaims that the liberated society will be created only through reconciling, creative and non-violent Love. To be effective in this struggle, Jesus recognized that it was necessary to involve *all of the people* (Matt. 23:13) and He openly stated that He would include in this revolutionary community people from all groups, as Elias and Eliseus had done in the time of famine and plague (Luke 4:25-27). He took His cause directly to Gays (the Centurion, John the Beloved, Lazarus); Women (Mary & Martha, Mary His mother); those of "bad repute" (the Samaritan woman, Mary of Magdala, publicans, wine-bibbers); Black people (Simon of Cyrene); workers (Luke 4:30-32) and other victims of the world empire (Matt. 21:31). He was of the people, knew their problems and spoke their language (John 10:14-16). The oppressed heard Him gladly (Mark 12:37). They thronged about Him as He entered Jerusalem (Matt. 21:9-15) where He led the freedom march to the temple, overthrew the money-changers (Matt. 21:12) and boldly condemned all who oppress the people (Matt. 23) or who compromise with oppressive practices (Luke 22:25-26). He gave us the New Commandment—to love one another (John 15:12, 17) as the creative principle of non-violent revolution, this marking Him out as fulfilling the highest expectation of all religion and as illustrating the true and ultimate character of Humanity (Eph. 4:13).

Seeing that the world was following Jesus (John 12:19), the politicians planned to mob Him (Matt. 26:3-5). They were afraid to arrest Him on trumped-up charges lest there be an uprising of the People (Mark 14:1-2); so the syndicate put out a contract on Him to a double-agent, a collaboratorist, to deliver Him into their hands (Luke 22:3-6). Seized in the dead of night while the people were asleep (John 18:3), given a mock trial (Matt. 26:59-66) before daybreak, they demanded His death. He was killed on the Cross of an enemy of the State (Luke 23:44) as the Organizer of the people's Movement for liberation (Luke 23:5), crucified by the State (John 18:31) at the request of the institutional church of his time (Mark 15:11).

Jesus was executed as a political conspirator, a revolutionary, in an early conspiracy trial. By His lifestyle and by the deed of Golgotha, Jesus has imbedded Himself deep in the fabric of the Earth, and by the Resurrection Jesus broke with finality the bonds of darkness that we might come into the perfect Light. The Creative Spirit sent by Jesus is truly in the world, in the neighbor, in the whole creation—the heart of the struggle against war and division, violence and confusion, sexism, racism and imperialism; and for freedom, peace, clarity, spiritual unification and human dignity in a universal free Community of sister/brotherhood in the Creative Life.



THE COMMUNITY OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST
An Ecumenical Religious Order of
The Syro-Chaldean [Aisor] Ecumenical Catholic Communion
also known as
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The Community of the Love of Christ

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Addenda to: THE RENEWAL OF THE FAITH OF SYRO-CHALDEAN EVANGELICAL CATHOLICISM, AS TAUGHT BY MAR DIODORUS, THEODORE, NESTORIUS, AND JACOBUS (ULRIC VERNON HERFORD); AND THE FUTURE OF THE COMMUNION IN RADICAL CHRISTIAN ECUMENISM--submitted by the Most Rev. Mikhail Francis Itkin, CIG

A LINGUISTIC NOTE: In the above-mentioned paper, particularly in the quotations from the classical Syro-Chaldean writers that are dealt with from page 6 through page 10, some confusion may have arisen due to the various translators' use of the term "person" as well as other specific terms. In order to clarify some of this usage, so that the theological questions may be somewhat more clear, we provide this memo.

On page 10 (as one of the clearest examples), in the excerpt from the Propers for the Feast of the Three Greek—or Antiochene—Doctors, we read: "Woe and woe again to all...who do not confess Christ in two natures, two persons, and one parsufa of filiation." This has come immediately after dealing with the fact that Nestorius did not, however, claim two persons in Christ. Both statements are true.

In no way did Nestorius claim two persons in Christ, as the term person is commonly understood by us today. Using the actual Syriac words, the statement would read: "Woe and woe again to all...who do not confess Christ in two Kiani, two Qnuma and one Parsufa of filiation."

In order to clarify, we quote the Anglicans Maclean and Browne on the subject: "The word Kiana means nature. But no one can exactly explain Qnuma and Parsopa (sic). The former is the word used for the Persons of the Holy Trinity; and also in untechnical language (in classical Syriac), for 'oneself.' The latter, the Greek πρόσωπον, is used in the old grammars for 'person.' The ordinary traditional commentary on this phrase is as follows: Two Kiani—Christ has two natures. Two Qnumi—Christ is perfect God and perfect man. One Parsopa (sic)—there is only one Christ; not one God and one a man....Assemanni, however, says that by Qnuma the Syrians (East Syrians) mean hypostasis, by Parsopa a nature as patent to the senses) ('Bibl. Orient. De Syris Nestorianis', vol. iii, part i). But he may perhaps be prejudiced against the East Syrians, as being a Roman Catholic Maronite." (Maclean, Arthur John and Browne, William Henry, The Catholicos of the East and His People, London, SPCK, 1892).

More contemporary writers attribute parsufa (Syriac), or the Greek prosōpon to "presence" or "presence and will"; whereas Assemanni's understanding would seem to coincide with the true orthodoxy of Nestorian thought to a large degree.

Under this interpretation, Nestorianism not only constitutes a true orthodox Christological view, but contemporary Anglican Neo-Nestorians, particularly Pittenger and Robinson, seem very close to traditional Nestorian thought—particularly in their use of such terms as "The Word Incarnate," "God-in-man," and "The Human Face of God."

